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VOLUME THREE NUMBER THREE
MAY 1971

The Electronic Battlefield: Strangelove's Answer to War Crimes
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Letters

The Burn Ward

My copy of the April issue of *The Washington Monthly* came as I was about to wade into my taxes and decide whether my kids should go to a certain private school.

I read, instead—a little bit at a time—"The Burn Ward." When I finished, I wrote to the President:

I have just put down "The Burn Ward" in the new issue of *Washington Monthly*. I have been crying. I am 37.

Please take time to read the story, Sir. Then, please, please put an end to our part in the killing just as fast as you can.

Yours truly.

ERIC BLANCHARD
Washington, D. C.

What's Good for GM

In Philip Moore's article ["What's Good for the Country is Good for GM," December, 1970], he makes certain statements about Morgan Guaranty and the Southern Conference Educational Fund. So far as we can ascertain, there is no basis in fact for these statements. The Southern Conference Educational Fund did not have any shares of General Motors stock "in trust to Morgan Guaranty" or, to the best of our knowledge, in our care in any way. It did not threaten suit against us. We did not recall proxies and "vote again."

JOHN M. MEYER
New York, N. Y.

Mr. Meyer is chairman of the board of Morgan Guaranty Trust Company.

The author, Philip Moore, replies:

I apologize for my erroneous reference to the Morgan Guaranty Bank's voting of General Motors proxies. While I had checked it with my source, he had the wrong information. While the actual facts are essentially true, I cited the wrong bank. I should have confirmed it with Morgan Guaranty. The Southern Conference Educational Fund did not threaten suit and the Morgan Guaranty Bank did not recall proxies and vote again.

One is always loathe to admit an error of fact or judgment. This is especially true in the public interest field where accuracy is so important. Nevertheless, in fields where a myriad of facts can sometimes get confused, mistakes do occur. And when they do, we should admit our errors and not attempt to cover them up through rhetoric and polemics.

Part of the problem (although it doesn't excuse my error) is that banks hold thousands of shares in custodian accounts for other clients. These shares are in turn held in street name by brokerage houses, so that the shares are registered in the name of the brokerage house whose client is the bank, whose client, in turn, is the individual, the real owner of the stock. This pattern of institutional insulation makes it extremely difficult for the real owner of the stock to insure that his right to vote the stock is protected.

The Rising Profits of Public Service

I am very sorry to hear that you think Federal employees are overpaid ["The Rising Profits of Public Service," by Taylor Branch, March]. Just try sitting at your desk eight hours a day for 30 years and being charged leave if you come in five minutes late, if you take over 30 minutes for lunch, or if you leave five minutes early. It's like being buried alive for 30 years. Perhaps you would rather pay your taxes to hire some "cheaper" help to run the Civil Service for you—if you want mediocrity, you go ahead, and campaign to cut our pay.

ANONYMOUS
Arlington, Va.

Corporate Responsibility Conference

As participants in the soon-to-be-held Conference on Corporate Responsibility, sponsored jointly by the *Institutional Investor* and *The Washington Monthly*, we were outraged by the ad for the conference which appeared in the March 1971 issue of the *Monthly*. In our view it badly misstated the purpose of the consumer and corporate responsibility movements and reflected precisely the kind of irresponsible decision-making processes which growing numbers of citizens have begun to distrust.

The ad began with the following inflammatory paragraph:

Angry demonstrations, outbreaks of unparalleled bitterness, and even a macing incident marred annual meetings across the country last year. A Bank of America office

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was burned to the ground. Students attacked Dow Chemical recruiters because the company produced napalm. Picketers gave the Chase Bank a lot of publicity for doing business in South Africa. . . . And James Roche learned that many of the nation's institutional investors may vote their shares for "Campaign GM" this year if General Motors doesn't respond to the objections of the Project on Corporate Responsibility.

The ad then asked: "WHO IS NEXT?" and stated that at the conference "the leaders of every major phase of the corporate responsibility movement will say whom they plan to attack next, for what reasons, and using what tactics." Smart corporate executives should attend this conference, according to the ad, "because your image with the public today can dramatically affect the value of your stock, your ability to attract customers, and the degree of regulation under which you labor."

The ad clearly pandered to the worst fears of corporate America, suggesting that we will talk about violence and offer ways for corporations to avoid violent confrontations. Violence is simply not the issue. The issues involve the ways in which corporations can conduct their business in a manner responsive to all the people. As it happened, the conference did not bother to invite any of the people involved in most of the demonstrations they cite, able and articulate men and women who should have been called on to speak for themselves.

We are involved in the consumer, environmental, and corporate responsibility movements. We agreed to speak without compensation at the Conference partly in order to raise money for the *Monthly* and partly because it seemed to offer a good forum to discuss with corporate leaders some of our concerns about the ways in which our environment, our diet, and even some of our fundamental constitutional freedoms have been debased in pursuit of profit and in the name of progress. We have no intention of discussing targets or tactics with corporate leaders or of telling them what kinds of cosmetic changes they can make in order to hustle a few more bucks.

The ad appeared to be deliberately provocative and misleading. It is obvious from reading it that the conference sponsors felt that corporate leaders would not want to attend a conference billed as a serious discussion of the issues. From our experience, we disagree. Each of us speaks regularly to meetings of businessmen who are genuinely concerned about finding solutions to problems which their corporations have helped to create. But even were the analysis right, we would still find the ad comptemptible, for it is misleading (a form of bait and switch) with precisely the kind of distorted claims which we have been endeavoring to eliminate.

We were also disappointed with the $300 fee and have recommended to the sponsors that they make available an adequate number of free tickets to groups interested in corporate responsibility.

AILEEN ADAMS COWAN
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JOHN ESPOSITO
BETTY FURNESS
PHIL MOORE
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The Electronic Battlefield: Wiring Down the War

by Paul Dickson and John Rothchild

The Pentagon's troubles lately have nothing to do with weapons and everything to do with people. More GIs answer simple orders with complicated lawsuits brought by outside lawyers with no feeling for military discipline. The GIs who do fight are in danger of court-martial or scorn back home, and the South Vietnamese Army does not seem imbued with the patriotic spirit usually associated with a defense of the United States. The volunteer army may solve some of the morale problems, but even if the officers inspect the barracks with gray gloves rather than white ones, the dissension is likely to grow.

The Pentagon knows this. The lesson of Vietnam is that technology has not stopped people, but the more forward-looking military theorists take this to mean only that the technology wasn't good enough. If the Army had those seismic sensors and people sniffers earlier, if they had that Stanford robot now being developed with Defense Department money, the one that can knock a block off a table, or if the MIT robot, which can now detect individual faces, had learned to tell a North Vietnamese from a South Vietnamese, the whole war employment problem might have been easily solved.

The military has developed, and is perfecting, all those things now as components of the Automated Battlefield, the real revolution to come out of the Vietnam War. The possibility is that future conflicts will be fought with sensors that signal the enemy presence to computers, which order air strikes from pilotless drone helicopters, or ion curtains that zap anything that steps across. With the all-Automated Battlefield, bravery becomes automatic, loyalty unquestioned, responsibility undecipherable, and the robots that roll up to join the volunteer army of the 1980s may not even care which of them is the first component to win the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Such was the vision of the Automated Battlefield as it made a formal debut in October, 1969, at the annual meeting of the Association of the U. S. Army—the Army's prime alumni association, all-purpose lobby, and booster club. In an inspiration blitz

Paul Dickson, a frequent contributor to The Washington Monthly *is author of a book on think-tanks to be published this year by Atheneum. John Rothchild is a managing editor of* The Washington Monthly.

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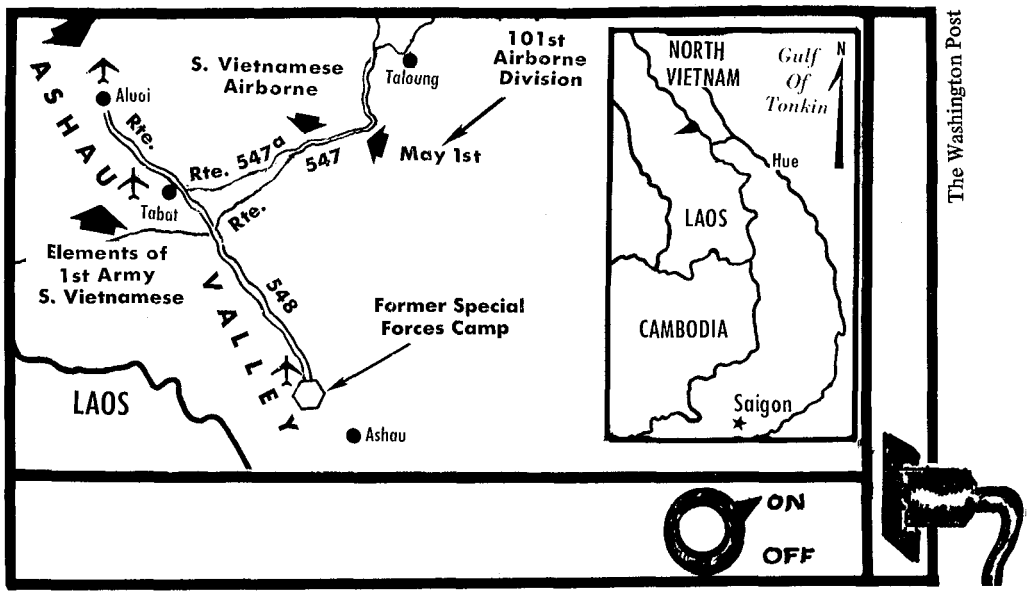

The Washington Post

reminiscent of Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" or Adlai Stevenson's "I See America" speeches, General William C. Westmoreland squinted into the future: "I see battlefields or combat areas that are under 24-hour real or near-real-time surveillance of all types. I see battlefields on which we can destroy anything we can locate through instant communications and the almost instantaneous application of highly lethal firepower." He concluded, "Hundreds of years were required to achieve the mobility of the armored division. A little over two decades later we had the airmobile division. With cooperative effort, no more than 10 years should separate us from the Automated Battlefield."

The Automated Battlefield. The term had been used before, just as the synonym "electronic battlefield" had, but never had it been publicly and officially identified as a concept. Many of the electronic gimmicks of the Vietnam War—laser-guided bombs, sensors, view scopes that see the enemy in the dark—had already been in use for some time, but Westmoreland was the first to show how they could be fit into a new philosophy of war, a manless, foolproof, giant lethal pinball machine out of which no living thing could ever escape. The entire world, if wired right, could become a great maze of circuitry and weaponry, a jungle from which those who walk off the straight paths from home to office to store would be immediately and totally eliminated.

The Automated Battlefield concept is traceable to early 1966 to a group at the Institute for Defense Analyses, the think-tank located across the parking lot from the Pentagon. The group, known as the JASON Division, is a collection of top academic scientists who meet under the Institute's auspices to brainstorm new military ideas. In 1966 JASON conjured up the idea of an electronic fence (surrounded by mines and other "area denial" devices) strung across Vietnam just below the DMZ to cut out infiltration from the north. They presented their idea to the Pentagon, and in September, 1966, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara announced that the U. S. was beginning a high-priority program to build the fence. Dubbed "the McNamara Line" and "Maginot East" by the press, the program moved quickly, and by December, 1967, the Pentagon let it be known that part of the fence was in operation. The portion that was not

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operational, however, was reportedly hampered by technical problems, and it was disclosed in the fiscal 1969 military budget hearings that the original barrier concept had been dropped.

The military, which never called the project "the McNamara Line," referred to the effort with the awkward code name "Dyemarker/Muscle Shoals." But the concept of Dyemarker/Muscle Shoals didn't die after the wall itself was abandoned. The idea of an electronic battlefield transcended the wall to become much more flexible and mobile—all the gadgetry could be transported from battle to battle, converting any terrain into an instant house of horrors. Essentially, the McNamara Line had lost its linearity and became the Westmoreland Umbrella, opening across South Vietnam and spreading into Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand. Ironically, while the wall was being given smug obituaries in the press, its parent project was passing into the $1-billion budget category and rising.

The Automated Battlefield idea immediately proved to be a magnet for three critical ingredients: money, hardware, and organizations. All three services kicked in from their emergency funds to help pay for the Battlefield, and each contributed components already on the shelves and started researching and developing others. The Navy, for example, went to work adapting some of its acoustic buoys and oceanic sensing devices for land warfare. Such devices were given head-of-the-assembly-line privileges at defense plants by order of the Secretary of Defense. Three groups acted as catalytic agents for development of the battlefield. First was the Defense Communications Planning Group (DCPG), which had been formed in 1966 to honcho the fence but had eagerly shifted to the more advanced mobile concept. In 1969 two new groups were organized for the single purpose of moving the Battlefield along. One was STANO (Surveillance, Target, Acquisition, and Night Observation), which was formed to pull together the developments of over 100 mostly classified electronic and weapons efforts for the project. The other was Project MASSTER (Mobile Army Sensor System Test and Review) located at Fort Hood, Texas, which was given the job of integrating and testing the program. Since then, several more task forces and program groups have hung out their shingles to help the Battlefield advance.

The Electronic Cavalry

Over 100 items are already part of a primitive Automated Battlefield in Vietnam and dozens more are undergoing development in the United States. These devices and operations have attracted one of the most colorful and obfuscating menageries of code words and project names since Captain Video went off the air—to name a few, Dual Blade, Tomcat, Duffle Bag, Tight Jaw, College Eye, Infant, Grasshopper, Pave Knife, Command Bolt, and Igloo White. The hardware that belongs to these names includes antipersonnel mines, laser-guided bombs, night vision devices, cluster bombs, "people sniffers" (or chemical detectors which react to enemy body odors), thermal imagers which react to body heat, button-sized bomblets, and seismic registers which pick up the thump of trucks or troops on the move. In Vietnam, commanders pick and choose items from this array to serve specific missions—a process not unlike putting together a hi-fi rig with off-the-shelf components. Generally, the more innocuous the code name, the more deadly the weapon.

The totally integrated battlefield, the electric war game that Westmoreland described, will evolve slowly from the most successful of the components now in use in Vietnam. With experience, certain sets of devices are brought together as larger units, or programs, that include a sensing device, a communications link, and an

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attack mechanism.

One example is project Igloo White, which has played a key role in the air war in Laos. Acoustic and seismic sensors contained in long spears are flung from high-speed aircraft and stuck into the ground in series. A radio/microphone arrangement is dropped near the spears by a parachute that is designed to snag in a tree. Any or all of these devices can pick up sounds or disturbances of troops or trucks moving nearby and transmit them to a surveillance plane flying in the area, which, in turn, relays the signals to a ground control station. Then the information is fed into a computer, and experts called "skilled target analysts" decide whether the electronic tracks were made by the enemy or by friendly forces or by buffalo. Should the computer printout conclude it was enemy, an air strike would be ordered. Early in March, the Air Force claimed that Igloo White made it possible for U. S. aircraft to find and destroy some 80 per cent of the traffic coming down the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos since October, 1970.

There is no compromise-of-secrets problem with Igloo because if the sensors are tampered with by the enemy, they self-destruct, "Mission Impossible" style.

It is not merely enough to sit and count trucks as they pass by. To be truly effective, an Automated Battlefield must be able to strike back, and there is a wide selection of weaponry that can be turned on the spot where the Igloo sensors picked up the noises. One is Night Hawk, a helicopter gunship with special devices that can see in the dark. Major General Ellis W. Williamson testified last year as to Night Hawk's effectiveness: "We killed 103 North Vietnamese soldiers during a one-month period. . . at no personnel cost to us, not even an injury."

One of Night Hawk's limitations, however, is that it involves too many people, middlemen soldiers who must decide when and where to fire the guns. This creates all kinds of problems like second thoughts and fear, not to mention human error, which are gradually being eliminated as the Battlefield moves away from men and toward computers. Commando Bolt, another member of the Igloo White team, isn't perfect, but it approaches the goal, as Brigadier General William J. Evans explained to a Senate subcommittee last year:

> An assessment officer monitors sensor activations in his area of interest. When he recognizes a target signature from a [classified exhibit] particular sensor string, he calls up on his cathode ray tube a sketch of the road net which that string of sensors is monitoring; the computer automatically displays and updates on the CRT the movement of the target along that road [deleted]. He then can instruct one or a number of the [deleted] F-4's, which I mentioned earlier, to enter these [deleted] coordinates into the aircraft's computer. This gives the aircraft the course to steer to that point and produces an automatic release of ordnance at the proper time to hit the target. Using area-type ordnance, excellent results have been obtained with this blind-bombing method.

Other Igloo White weapons include Wappum and Dragontooth, anti-personnel devices that are dropped from the air, arming themselves as they spin to the ground. These weapons stop people but leave vehicles intact, as explained by Air Force Major Raymond D. Anderson: "If a person steps on it, it could blow his foot off. If a truck rolls over it, it won't [even] blow the tire."

Once the Automated Battlefield is completely established in a certain area—with listening devices sprinkled in the trees and rockets poised to decimate the area with the first squawk of a sensor—the object of warfare will not be to engage the enemy, but to herd him, like sheep, into the electric circus.

All of the Igloo White weapons can be used together, in sequences: the sensors pick up traffic, then laser-guided bombs stream in to cut the

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trail, followed by a liberal scattering of anti-materiel mines and Wappums, and topped off with old-fashioned bombs, just in case anything gets through.

Tuning in to the War

By eliminating the human element, or as General Williamson puts it, "fighting with bullets instead of bodies," the Automated Battlefield will wipe out whatever superegos, ids, and consciences stand between the weapon and the enemy, thus lessening the difficulty of deciding who the enemy really is. This job will be taken over by experts—the skilled target analysts—for whom the movements of war will merely be green blips on a cathode ray tube, or series readouts from a computer, men who are technically equipped to decide between friend or foe. The Lieutenant Calleys of war will be left home—if a drone helicopter is ordered by a computer to strike at a sensor post being passed by children and water buffalos, it means that there has been an error in information, not in law or conscience—a court martial cannot try a manless helicopter, nor can a chain of command be easily recognized in a more modern form of organization where only machines can be held responsible for their own actions.

This is the nice thing about the Electronic Battlefield. It eliminates a constant problem of Vietnam and other wars—that some men must go and fight while others watch on television. With the truly automated system, everybody, including the soldiers, will watch the war on televisions—the only difference beteween the Army and the American Legion being the placement of the viewing screen. And with satellite communications, it may even be possible for Legion groups or football fans at half time to be transmitted the sounds and electronic tracks of an actual person walking through the jungle right now, and then order the strike that destroys him—a portable command post could be driven from shopping center to shopping center on weekends. This would spread the burdens of war among the populace, and also solve the problem of how to win a war while withdrawing the troops. As General Williamson said, "We of the Army are continuing tests at Fort Hood and elsewhere. We are making unusual efforts to avoid having the American young man stand toe-to-toe, eyeball-to-eyeball, or even rifle-to-rifle against an enemy that may outnumber him on the battlefield."

The Vanishing Robot

Another benefit of the Battlefield is that it cannot be pinned down either abroad or at home. It eludes both the enemy that can never locate or destroy it, and the alert citizen or Pentagon critic who can't find it in the budget. It does not show up as a line item on anyone's budget request, and its components are spread throughout all parts of the services. Similarly, development and production have been parceled out to several dozen contractors, none of which has been designated "prime contractor." Those working on the Battlefield range from biggies like IBM, GE, RCA, Hughes Aircraft, and Raytheon, to little specialty firms like Dorsett Electronics of Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Resdel Engineering of Pasadena, California.

There can be no cost overruns because there is no original estimate to overrun. There is no central project office to query or blame if a component doesn't work. There is no publicly announced timetable, so the development of the Battlefield can never be criticized for falling behind schedule. And nobody knows exactly where the Battlefield begins or ends.

Eluding the domestic war critic, a much greater real threat to the Pentagon than the enemy, who, after all, requires more hardware and more appropriations to eliminate, has not

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been one of the great successes of the Pentagon in recent years. The Automated Battlefield, however, has been remarkably effective, through the strategy of "segmented development," in staying out of newspapers and hearing rooms. The success of the strategy can be seen in the problems encountered in trying to puzzle out the dimensions and cost of the program thus far.

Even after Westmoreland's speech, the Battlefield was still treated as if nobody had heard of it. Six months elapsed before any critical questions came from Capitol Hill, and most Senators and Congressmen were unaware (many still are) that we even have such a program. *Product Engineering*, a trade magazine, did an article on the Battlefield in February, 1970, well before the concept had achieved any attention on the Hill, pointing out, "Congressmen this year will discover they have been trapped again into financing another multi-billion-dollar military development program while learning almost nothing about its overall size, cost, or future defense implications." But if Congress doesn't know about the money, business does. The magazine went on to report that in January, 1970, more than 800 defense contractors showed up for a briefing on the Battlefield, and more than twice that number were turned away because of lack of space.

It was not until July, 1970, that a publicly audible note of dissent was heard from Congress. It occurred when Senator William Proxmire made a speech on the Battlefield: "One of the biggest problems. . . is that the sensors cannot discriminate between soldiers and women and children. Whole villages may be wiped out by seeding wide areas with air-dropped explosives designed to kill anyone who ventures near them. . . . A second major problem is the extreme vulnerability of much of the electronic equipment to malfunction due to rough treatment. . . ."

Although Proxmire's statement was based on information gleaned from publicly available trade, business, and military magazines, Senator Barry Goldwater inferred that Proxmire had let the nation down by giving up one of its most tightly held secrets. Said Goldwater, ". . . it [the Battlefield] is so highly classified that even the Armed Services Committee has not been able to hold hearings on it. . . . So as long as he has sprung it, so to speak, I can mention it." A few days later Goldwater went on to praise the project: "The increase in sophistication of this equipment has been nothing short of fabulous. Again, I am not allowed to say some of the things I have seen it do, some of the ways it is helping our men in Laos particularly—our airmen and ground forces." On July 31, Proxmire reminded Goldwater that we were not supposed to have troops in Laos. Goldwater agreed and amended his statement to the effect that it had aided airmen in Laos thereby helping our ground forces in South Vietnam. He then pointed out, without prompting, "The real guts, you might say, of our sensor system is in Thailand, where it is used on the Ho Chi Minh trail."

Later in the month Proxmire rose again to challenge the program: "Most members of the Senate I have talked to did not even know we had such a program." The questions were straightforward: How much was the Automated Battlefield costing? To what extent did its development encourage future U. S. involvement in guerrilla wars? To what extent would sensing capabilities of the system be employed domestically, adding another threat to privacy? And with what result has it been used in Southeast Asia?

Proxmire was promised answers by Senator John Stennis, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and in November a special three-man "Electronic Battlefield Subcommittee" met for three days of closed ses-

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sions to look into the program. Senators Goldwater and Daniel K. Inouye were appointed members and Senator Howard W. Cannon was named chairman.

Toys Don't Care Who You Are

The Pentagon brought down some of its newly developed sensors to the hearing and laid them on the table, all the MAGIDS, MINISIDS, and MICROSIDS, for the Senators to see. The whole presentation was something like a re-run from Mr. Wizard, with the gee-whizzing lad sitting at his knee, bedazzled with the glories of modern science:

> Senator Goldwater: Does that beep at regular intervals?
>
> General Deane: Just when it detects something, but right now, because there is so much disturbance here, it keeps beeping.

The disturbances being picked up by the sensors in the hearing room were remarkably positive, even adulatory, and Senator Goldwater led the gleeful, Christmas morning chatter, causing the sensors to beep back in a duck-like chorus of agreement. Before the first witness hit the stand, Senator Goldwater exclaimed, "I personally think it has the possibility of being one of the greatest steps forward in warfare since gunpowder."

Such expectations were confirmed by a long line of military men who testified to the merits of the Automated Battlefield as applied in Vietnam—how it aided the battle of Khe Sanh, made more accurate the random Harrassing and Interdiction program (firing blind into the jungle), and how it saved American lives. The sensors, placed around American encampments, provided an early warning that even made the cooks more confident, according to General Williamson, who recounted one raid: "I think I have never seen a more confident group of cooks in my life, who, after eliminating some 78 of the enemy in one night, boasted that hot breakfast was served right on time the next morning."

The majors and generals gave many such testimonials to the sensors that detected the enemy and the weapons sent to destroy them, stories which seemed to bring back for a moment the glories of past wars not usually associated with Vietnam. They talked of killing hundreds of enemy without any American losses. "In all, on the second night," went one tale of the Night Hawk helicopter attack program, "323 additional enemy were killed and 10 live prisoners taken. I had to move two additional bulldozers up to the area to bury the dead." They talked of expanding the battlefield to other places, like Europe, and what the problems might be. Major General John R. Deane told Senator Stennis that something new would have to be developed for England: "There are great chalk deposits, a very small distance below the surface of the ground. . . you don't get very good seismic reaction in that kind of soil. . . ." They explained the domestic uses, that the U. S. Border Patrol has already been outfitted with thermal devices to spot border-crossers. (According to a report in *Electronics* magazine, war-tested sensors have also been placed under the White House lawn and in the yards of President Nixon's other homes. This caused a problem in Key Biscayne, Florida, where the salt spray activated the warnings, but the community reacted against a proposal to alter the shoreline so the spray wouldn't hit the lawn.)

One thing the military didn't explain was how the sensors could tell the difference between friend or foe. The investigation hardly brushed on the question of how these computer-driven things that go bump in the night knew for sure who or what is getting clobbered. You don't have to be a scenario writer to imagine what could happen: a programming error that wipes out a neutral village; an automated firepower system able to

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perceive everything save for a surrender flag (which someone forgot to tell it about); a malfunctioning sensor which orders a strike on our own technicians.

Many of these would be problems for the all-Automated Battlefield, and some are even problems for the sensor devices and systems like Igloo White already in use in Vietnam. As it now stands, a body becomes a number only after death in Vietnam, but with the new Battlefield, even a living soldier will be a numerical blip on a lighted panel, his existence or destruction known only by a blip along the sensor paths, a Tinkerbell whose death is signaled when the blip disappears from the tracking machine, meaning that the drone helicopter has arrived and gone.

Could Mylai have been a product of sensors and drone helicopters? General Deane, during the hearings, addressed himself to that question:

> You say the sensors won't tell you. And the sensors might give you an indication if over an acoustic sensor you heard voices and determined from the conversation that they were enemy, that is the only way I would know you would be able to tell. Now, when you get into that kind of a problem, you have to bring to bear your knowledge of where your friendly forces are. . . and use your best judgment. I think the commanders that I have known, if they had doubts, they would not fire.

The Automated Battlefield is promising, however, not because it demands such a rather unlikely combination of military intelligence and military good will, but because it eliminates their necessity. Nobody will be able to tell what or who has been killed, or why the computer ordered the bombs dropped on a specific piece of real estate. Even the words used to describe the successes or failures of the Battlefield will be indistinguishable from those used in second-level electronics textbooks—modern war stories will be confused with circuit diagrams. The subcommittee caught a glimpse of this when its director of investigations, Ben J. Gilleas, asked Major Jerry E. Hudson, "Did you have much trouble with false alarms?" Major Hudson answered, "We did later on. The interpretation people did, yes sir. That word has been stricken from the vocabulary. That is now a nontargetable activation."

Of course, the Automated Battlefield would be a happy alternative to war if both sides had them and merely mapped out an area on which machines could fight until one side emerged with fewer blasted components. Spilled spaghetti-like computer-ganglia, fragmented transistors, and severed carbon memory cores are a fine trade-off for the equivalent in human components. But as the equation becomes American electronics vs. guerrilla flesh, one wonders.

GI Joe, IBM 360

As for specific previews of coming attractions for the system, some strong hints are emanating from the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA), the research contracting arm of the Secretary of Defense. ARPA has been very active in the Battlefield program and in 1970 contributed almost $30 million to the project kitty. While some of its other research projects have not been officially connected with the Automated Battlefield, it is not hard to see how some of them will fit neatly into it, especially when one recalls Westmoreland's utopian description of the totally automated future army. One such project is called Nite Gazelle, an effort aimed at fielding an unmanned attack helicopter outfitted with a moving-target indicator.

Most mind-boggling in terms of future implication is Pentagon support of research projects in the realm of artificial intelligence, or robotry. For several years now military money has backed projects at Stanford Research Institute and MIT. These efforts have gone far beyond the theoretical stage and have developed beyond mechani-

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cal infancy. The Stanford robot can pick out and kick over wood blocks, and the MIT robot can distinguish between faces. While neither robot has yet been drafted into battle, the Department of Defense is not spending money on these projects for nothing.

The costs of the Battlefield are as elusive as the components. Proxmire led off the bidding in 1970 by claiming that the Battlefield had thus far cost over $2 billion. He was immediately contradicted by Chairman Stennis, who insisted that it had been no more than $1.685 billion. The next voice heard was that of the Senate Armed Services Preparedness Investigating subcommittee, which, after three days of closed hearings on the subject in November, 1970, determined that $3.25 billion had been appropriated for the program, although not all had been spent.

While the cost that has been run up so far for the Battlefield is hard to puzzle out, it is nothing compared to the question of what the Battlefield will eventually cost. One of the few estimates made thus far has been one of $20 billion offered by *Business Week*. The Army has tagged that estimate as "without credence" but has not itself given a comprehensive alternative. Clues to the eventual costs may lie in some of the current activity geared to developing and spreading the Automated Battlefield.

At present, the program is moving in many directions. Large hunks of the existing Automated Battlefield will be left in Vietnam for the South Vietnamese to use as they see fit. In fact, all ARVN divisions have been given sensor units, a Sensor School for Vietnamese has been in operation since late 1969, and America's main sensor depot at Cam Ranh Bay is being Vietnamized. Pentagon research boss John Foster announced to the Senate Armed Services Committee in 1969 that work was beginning on the design of a counter-infiltration and intrusion detection system for the Republic of Korea.

Meanwhile, the Army is now organizing its new TRICAP Division, which it hopes to have in operation by this summer at Fort Hood. The function of the division is "test and experimentation," under the command of MASSTER, which will use it to test new Automated Battlefield techniques.

And meanwhile, since the hearings, Proxmire remains alone as the major critic. One reason suggested for why the Battlefield has attracted so little questioning is that the project fits in snugly with an emerging precept of the Nixon doctrine: reduced troops abroad. Several military witnesses told the subcommittee that the introduction of Automated Battlefield items in Vietnam went a long way to replace the forces that are being withdrawn. Similarly in tune with Administration policy is a point which Senator Goldwater was the first to raise publicly—that the Battlefield is a prime reason why the Army could go to an all-volunteer force. A capital-intensive, officers-only Army would both eliminate the need for the troublesome grunts and accommodate the wishes of the contractors.

Earlier this year, Sanford Gottlieb, the executive director of SANE, took to the congressional witness chair to offer his thoughts on the all-volunteer Army. He came out against the draft but also asserted the opinion that Congress is in no position to make an intelligent decision on an all-volunteer Army or any other future martial configuration until the American people first decide the more basic question of what they want an Army to do. The same question of America's future combat function must be applied to the military's new concept of battle. If such questions are not raised and resolved, the nation may find that by default it is in possession of the first ever, totally automated world police force. The down payment on this one has already been made and they're starting to put in the wiring. ■

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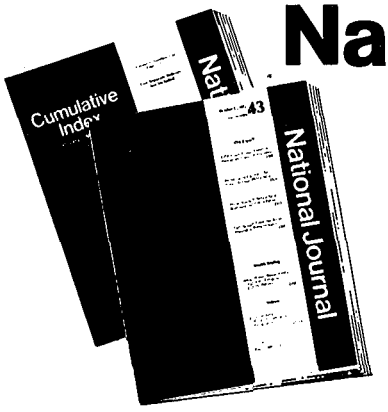

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The Dairy Lobby Buys the Cream of the Congress

by Frank Wright

As agriculture ceases to be a major occupation for the American people, it also loses prominence as the preserver of the country's values and traditions. We still recognize democracy's debt to the soil through terms like "fleecing the public," "milking the company," and "porkbarrel," but the words have followed technology and money to the cities and attached themselves to the more glamorous industries like oil, banking, and aerospace. The pork porkbarrel can't possibly stand up anymore to the cadmium porkbarrel or the cable television porkbarrel.

This doesn't mean that farming has completely lost the ability to favor—and be favored—by Congress. While newer industries may monopolize the more experienced legislators in matters of give and take, men like Thomas Dodd or the late Robert Kerr, the dairy lobby has gotten remarkable results this year by investing in Senators and Congressmen publicly thought to be less inclined to serve the lobbyists—men like Edmund Muskie, William Proxmire, Harold Hughes, Hubert Humphrey, and Wright Patman.

These men would never be found doing the same thing for oil that they have done for milk, but perhaps milk money is thought to enjoy the sanctity of the product from which it is made. In any case, the dairy lobby's investment in these legislators, and others, has paid off handsomely—while the dairymen bought into last year's election campaigns for about $1 million, they stand to get back as much as 300 times that amount after congressional pressure, applied in large degree by those who received the money, forced the Nixon administration to reverse itself on the question of milk price supports for 1971.

On March 12, Secretary of Agriculture Clifford Hardin announced that the support level would remain at the $4.66 per hundredweight in effect for

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1970. The price applies to what is called "manufacturing milk," a basic grade used to make butter, cheese, and nonfat powdered milk. Whenever the market price falls below the support price, the government begins buying, thus assuring the farmer he will have a place to sell at a guaranteed price. The Agriculture Department expects that these subsidy payments for the marketing year now ending will approximate $380 million, not quite as much as the C-5A overrun, but a goodly amount of pocket money, nonetheless. The government-owned milk goes into the school lunch program, is distributed among the poor, and is dispersed overseas.

In his March 12 announcement, Hardin said that production was adequate to meet the nation's needs, no surplus was accumulating, and most milk was being sold by farmers to processors at prices higher than the support level, so there was no reason to raise the support. It was all very much in keeping with the Administration's general desire in farm affairs to rely as much as possible on the free market.

However, by March 25, just 13 days later, the Secretary had changed his mind. The support level would be raised after all, to $4.93, an increase of 27 cents. The price took effect April 1, the beginning of the new marketing year under the farm subsidy law.

The dairy industry, with a few noteworthy exceptions, like Land O'Lakes, was ecstatic, declaring the increase a great break for the milk-producing farmer. Some industry experts, though, saw trouble ahead. If farmers responded by sharply increasing production, there would be an oversupply, and free market prices would likely drop accordingly. Under those circumstances, they said, the Administration's action could cost the taxpayers up to $300 million in increased subsidies to buy the surplus.

In view of that financial risk and the fact that President Nixon's proposed budget for the coming year already envisions a deficit of several billion dollars, the success of the lobbying campaign that prompted Hardin's turnabout was even more impressive. The leaders were the country's biggest milk-producing cooperatives, particularly the Associated Milk Producers, Inc. (AMPI) of San Antonio, Texas. AMPI, an outgrowth of the constantly burgeoning merger movement among farm co-ops, is only two years old. But it represents approximately 32,000 member farms in 20 midwestern states ranging from the Canadian border to the Gulf of Mexico, and it markets about 10 per cent of the nation's milk.

Milk is Thicker than Water

The milk co-ops descended on Washington, in person and by mail. Their allies in Congress helped in two ways—by rushing to introduce legislation that would require the Administration to raise the support price and by lining up in private to urge the Administration to reconsider. Generally speaking, Democrats took the former course, and Mr. Nixon's fellow Republicans, not wishing to break publicly with him, took the latter. (The lobbyists favored Administration action because it was easier than buying a new law.)

Some of the congressional support for the subsidy increase may have grown from a real interest in the welfare of farmers, but much of it seems to have grown out of large campaign contributions.

During the past two years, according to records filed with Congress, Representative W. R. Poage (D-Texas), chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, received $5,000 in contributions from the dairy industry political financiers—even though he had no opposition for reelection in 1970. The record says that an additional $11,500 was spent on an appreciation dinner (or dinners—it is difficult to tell from the record) for Poage and Representative Wright Patman (D-Texas), chairman of the House Banking and Cur-

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rency Committee, who had only nominal election opposition last year. Similarly, $2,000 was spent on an appreciation dinner for Representative Carl Albert (D-Okla.), Speaker of the House, another who was reelected last year without opposition.

Representative Ed Jones (D-Tenn.), a ranking member of the House Dairy and Poultry subcommittee, received $7,500 in campaign contributions—even though he ran without opposition. Another member of the subcommittee, Representative Watkins Abbitt (D-Va.), received $8,000 to help him in a three-way election contest against nominal opposition.

Others on the full committee received contributions, too. Rep. Page Belcher (R-Texas), the ranking minority member, got $5,000. Rep. Graham Purcell (D-Texas), a senior member, was given $6,530.

Senator Hubert Humphrey received $10,625 from the dairymen for his 1970 Senate comeback in Minnesota. He now is a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee. Senator William Proxmire (D-Wis.), third-ranking majority member of the Senate Agriculture Appropriations subcommittee, received $8,160 to help his runaway reelection victory. Senator Gale McGee (D-Wyo.), chairman of that subcommittee, also received $2,000.

Senator Edmund Muskie got $7,132, according to the records, and Senator Harold Hughes of Iowa, $5,000. The contribution to Hughes was listed in the records as an "honorarium." He was not up for reelection last year, but traveled extensively on behalf of other Democratic candidates.

The legislation, which these funds helped to foster, was introduced less than a week after Hardin's first announcement and just a few days before his second. All the recipients of the lobby money listed above, except Albert and Belcher, were cosponsors of the legislation. Albert's aides said he supported the bill actively and would have been a sponsor except for his custom, as Speaker, not to attach his name to any bills. Belcher worked internally, trying to persuade the Administration to change its mind without congressional action.

The main sponsor in the Senate was Gaylord Nelson (D-Wis.). He had about two dozen co-sponsors, and at least eight of those received contributions from the milkers, including the three on the key committees—McGee, Proxmire, and Humphrey.

In the House, more than 70 members signed up to support the legislation, including over 30 who received money from the industry during 1969 and 1970.

The Butter Uppers

The dairy money was funneled through four funds set up by the dairy people, who obviously included among their number somebody with an eye for imaginative acronyms as well as for political use of a dollar.

The biggest is the Trust for Agricultural Political Education (TAPE), an arm of AMPI in San Antonio. Since the spring of 1969, when it went into business, TAPE has reported receipts of $1,053,571 and expenditures of $447,291. The members, according to AMPI president John Butterbrodt, a Burnett, Wisconsin dairy farmer, voluntarily contribute one-third of one per cent of their milk checks to TAPE, up to a maximum of $100 per year. The maximum is set at that level, Butterbrodt says, to protect the anonymity of the givers. The law requires that persons who give more than $100 be listed by name in the reports filed with Congress.

The second-largest fund, the Trust for Special Political Agricultural Community Education (SPACE), has reported receipts of $181,472 and expenditures of $126,170. It is the agent of Dairymen, Inc., a large cooperative milk group in the southeastern United States, headquartered in Louisville,

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Kentucky.

The other two funds are much smaller. One is the Agricultural and Dairy Educational Political Trust (ADEPT) of Mid-America Dairymen, Inc., Springfield, Missouri. The other is the Agricultural Cooperative Trust (ACT) of the National Milk Producers Federation, located in Washington.

The dairy lobby got a kind of beyond-the-call-of-duty service from a few key Senators who could never afford to be so acquiescent to the better-known special interest groups. For example, in the case of Nelson, no money, according to the records, was required to enlist his rapid assistance. A person who was in close touch with the Senator's role said that AMPI lobbyists delivered the text of their proposed legislation to his Capitol Hill office, and he introduced it in the Senate the same day. In addition, AMPI provided at least some of the data for a statement which Nelson inserted in the Congressional Record in support of the bill. AMPI calculated for him the claim that Hardin's refusal to raise the support price would cost dairy farmers $500 million nationally and $90 million in Wisconsin. Nelson neglected in his statement to give AMPI credit for its fact-finding assistance.

Likewise, Hubert Humphrey failed to acknowledge the industry's help in providing him with a long statement making the case for an increased support price that he inserted into the Record. An aide said later that it, too, had been provided by AMPI.

Such political assistance was augmented by other dairy weapons.

Letters from AMPI members deluged numerous lawmakers. AMPI claimed that more than 50,000 pieces of mail were generated by dairy farmers in its part of the country within a week. Pressure also was applied directly to the Agriculture Department. George Mehren, an Assistant Secretary of Agriculture under Democrat Orville Freeman in the 1960s, joined the AMPI staff and began making the rounds of his old departmental haunts.

And, as an added bit of whipped cream, the dairymen won an audience with the President himself. On the morning of March 23, 11 days after the first Hardin announcement, a group of 16 dairy industry spokesmen were ushered into Mr. Nixon's office for a 30-minute session. Also present were Secretary Hardin and representatives of the Office of Management and Budget. Nine members of the delegation were from AMPI, including President Butterbrodt. Two others were from Pure Milk Products Cooperative, a Wisconsin outfit that is merging with AMPI. Mid-America and Dairymen were there, too. Apparently their arguments impressed Mr. Nixon because he heard them out for 58 minutes.

Not everybody gets a chance to plead their case with the President for an hour. But if they have recently spent more than $1 million on politics, it obviously helps. It also apparently helps if you speak for people from a segment of society that once supported Mr. Nixon at the ballot box but lately has shown signs of disenchantment—as the farmers did in the 1970 congressional elections.

The Land O'Lakes Dissent

Following the White House meeting, AMPI shut down the temporary command post it had set up at the Madison Hotel. "There was nothing left to do but wait," said one staff member.

The wait was short. Two days later, after reviewing all the evidence to make sure everything was perfectly clear, the Administration caved in. Hardin announced the increase in supports, and added that a "constant analysis" of the situation had provided new evidence of rising production costs which necessitated the higher price supports. Everyone concerned nodded and smiled.

The quick switch represented a defeat for one of AMPI's competitors, Land O'Lakes, Inc., a Minnesota-based

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cooperative best known for its butter. Prior to Hardin's first decision, Land O'Lakes officials had circulated among Administration farm officials a position paper opposing a price support increase and suggesting that AMPI had been manipulating the market to strengthen its argument in favor of one. The paper said higher government guarantees would only encourage greedy farmers to produce more, raise prices to consumers, forcing them to look for milk substitutes even more than they are now, and lead to higher government costs. The producer would be hurt in the long run, the paper said.

On the subject of price manipulation, Land O'Lakes claimed AMPI had been engaging early this year in "apparent" maneuverings to drive the market price paid to producers up to unrealistically high levels, about $5.10 for manufacturing milk in the Minnesota-Wisconsin area. This, it was claimed, laid the groundwork for the AMPI contention that support prices could be raised to almost that level for 1971 without boosting government costs—because free market milk prices paid to farmers would always be higher than the support level.

Land O'Lakes cited unexpectedly high prices paid by AMPI for cheese in Wisconsin as evidence of manipulation. According to Land O'Lakes, prices had been dropping in January and early February, large cheese merchandisers were cutting back on supplies and some were making sizable sales to the government—all signs that supplies were plentiful and further market price declines were anticipated. But since February 5, Land O'Lakes said in its paper, market activities "have not been normal." It noted that AMPI began buying carload lots of 40-pound cheese blocks at ever higher prices. The purchases totaled hundreds of thousands of pounds, a lot of cheese. In one case, Land O'Lakes charged, AMPI sold a carload to a dealer, then turned around and bought it back at the higher price. This maneuver obviously served to boost the price paid by the cheese factories to the milk farmers—especially when AMPI announced February 13 that it would begin paying $5 for every 100 pounds of manufacturing milk.

One AMPI spokesman, Jim Hill of the northern regional staff in New Ulm, Minnesota, acknowledged in an interview that his organization "may have overpaid producers a little bit to prove our point—to get the market price up around $5." But, he claimed, the price was not unrealistically high, as claimed by Land O'Lakes, because the "consumers were not complaining." AMPI says it would welcome a "full" and "official" investigation.

In any event, the dairy industry seems to have learned how to make money talk in Washington—and is proud of it.

The reasons that some of the Senators and Congressmen lent their voices to that money are less clear. Maybe it's because a political hand in the pocket of a deserving milk farmer smarts less than one in the pocket of a military contractor. Or because many of the dairymen who benefit from the subsidy are small or middle-sized farmers, not greedy conglomerates. Or because politicians from dairy states run no risks in helping farmers and great risks in refusing to do so. Or perhaps, since there is no organized opposition to the milk subsidy, and since agriculture is becoming a vague memory in the public mind, Congress is not challenged enough to even think about its coziness with the milkers.

But for men who actively oppose strong lobbies, congressional conflicts of interest, and the power of vested interests to buy legislation, the dairy deal remains an unexplained aberration. The big money may have moved long ago from the cow to the C-5A, and other places, but the difference is in degree rather than in kind, and it is worth asking whether those who criticize special favors to the latter and offer them to the former are morally ahead of their time, or just tactically behind. ■

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Memo of the Month

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Department of Transportation

February 22, 1971

Subject: Sick Leave Regulations

To: Staff – Bureau of Advance Planning

From: Louis E. Keefer, Director
Bureau of Advance Planning

To supplement the directive of September 4, 1970 regarding sick leave regulations:

Sick leave, like annual leave, can only be recorded in increments of a half-hour. This leads to difficulties in attempting to define what the nearest half-hour is (does 16-minutes constitute a half-hour, or what?). To avoid such difficulties, for absences of less than a full day 24-minutes will be granted free.

0 - 24 minutes	=	no charge
25 - 49 "	=	one half-hour
50 - 74 "	=	one hour

and so forth.

This will be fairer and easier to administer.

Where medical appointments are involved, it will not be necessary to complete the leave form prior to going for the appointment, but the immediate supervisor must be advised when the employee plans to leave the building.

This will take effect Monday, February 22, 1971.

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"Whose bread
I eat,
his song
I sing."
—Middle High German Saying

Courage without Esteem: Profiles in Whistle-Blowing

by Taylor Branch

Fifteen years ago, William H. Whyte wrote *The Organization Man* and warned that the independent American yeoman was being snuffed out forever by the "team player" —that an increasingly intertwined mesh of large institutions was closing off opportunities for the individualist like a zipper across the lips. The ambitious man would henceforth labor to build a broad network of esteem, good will, and obligation within the organization by emphasizing the amiable side of conformity and the flexible side of enthusiastic intelligence. This network would become the playing field upon which he would massage egos, put things together, innovate at the margins, and otherwise strive to become a captain of the team. When a nostalgic modern man tried to "stand on his own two feet," he would find them helplessly dangling in the air because the organization provided both his security and his advancement. When he tried to take a stand on principles and ideals, he would learn how to give and take.

Reverence for established organizations was so diminished in the 1960s, however, that a truly new breed arose—the whistle-blower. This fresh creature unexpectedly threw off the deepest impulses of the organization man—loyalty to the "team" and self-promotion as a team player—to publicly expose the crimes and inadequacies of his own institutions for a higher cause, generally the "public interest." There is scant encouragement, if any, for such a role in our literature or mythology. In fact, whistle-blowing is severely hampered by the image of its most famous historical model, Judas Iscariot—and by the judgment of Tacitus, who wrote about A.D. 100 that "traitors are dis-

Taylor Branch is a managing editor of The Washington Monthly.

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liked even by those they favor." Getting loyally along is so vital a social command that a child's flesh learns to crawl early at the thought of a tattle-tale or turncoat, however noble his purpose. And an adult knows instinctively that he who slays his institutional home will wear the mark of Cain.

Despite these obstacles, whistle-blowers have achieved a measure of public legitimacy—so much so that Ralph Nader recently sponsored a conference in their honor. Nine members of the new breed ascended the podium and presented the sunny, inspirational side of their deeds. It was clear that their employers—chiefly government agencies—were villains against the public, but it was also clear that these employing organizations had struck back harshly against them. Some of the speakers were obviously martyrs to their whistles, with only a clear conscience and a bit of media attention to make up for broken careers. Since the press will make news of the whistle-blower only while he is unusual, and since martyrdom seldom catches on, there is reason to believe that internal muckraking is a profession with an extremely limited future—regardless of its usefulness. A few case studies will reveal the kind of people who have exposed from within, what happens to them and to their charges, and the enormous psychological pressure upon them to keep differences inside the family. Then people can guess whether the whistle-blower will spawn a generation of non-organizational men for the public interest—or is merely a late whimper on William Whyte's relentless organizational tide.

Q. What do the following publishers have in common?

Psychology Today, Del Mar, Calif.
Progressive Architecture, Stamford, Conn.
The Nation, New York
The Christian Century, Chicago
The Progressive, Madison, Wis.
True Magazine, New York
The Washington Monthly, Wash. D.C.
The Atlantic Monthly, Boston
Little, Brown Books, Boston
World Health Magazine, Geneva
Atlantic Monthly Press, Boston
Commentary, New York

A: When they require nationwide and worldwide visibility in the mass media, they turn to

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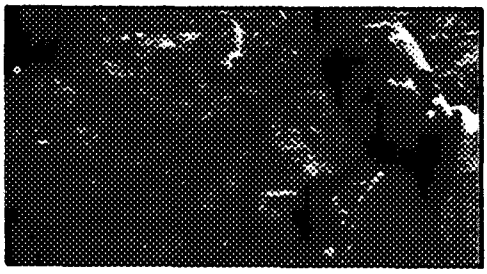

CHARLES PETTIS

In February of 1966, Charles Pettis headed for Lima, Peru, to his new job as resident engineer on Peru's long-standing dream—to build a highway across the Andes. A 44-year-old engineer and geologist, Pettis was to play a crucial role in the 146-mile, $46-million project that was designed to open up trade for the first time between Peru's coastal cities on one side of the mountains and the isolated interior regions on the other.

The highway would not only bolster the hopes and incomes of most Peruvians, but it would also refurbish the image of American foreign assistance. It was an aid project through and through, with $12 million from the Agency for International Development and $23 million from the Export-Import Bank—the balance from Peru. There were the usual minor irritants for the recipient country, such as AID contracting regulations that effectively eliminated

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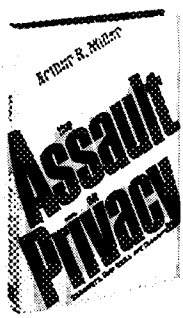
all firms except American ones from the bidding, but such things were overlooked in general enthusiasm for the road.

Pettis was under contract to Brown & Root Overseas, Inc.—an international engineering firm based in Houston, whose foreign aid business had prospered mightily since Lyndon Johnson entered the White House. Brown & Root was hired to protect the interests of the Peruvian government by overseeing the construction efforts of the main contractor, Morrison-Knudsen of Boise, Idaho. As resident engineer, Pettis went to work for his client, the Peruvian government; and his signature was required on the payroll to signify that Peru's interests were being protected and that the contract specifications were being enforced.

His misgivings about the project began when he surveyed the design and found that it called for cutting channels up to 300 feet deep through the notoriously unstable Andes mountains—with almost sheer cliffs to be left on the sides of the road. He was further disturbed that the design team had taken inadequate geological borings to determine the mountains' susceptability to slides, which is considerable. These faults and many others

Answers to April political puzzle:

"...thirteen years to 1984..."



ARTHUR R. MILLER

The Assault on Privacy

Computers, Data Banks, and Dossiers

With a Foreword by Senator Sam J. Ervin, Jr.

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On February 23rd, Senator Sam J. Ervin, Jr. opened his widely-publicized subcommittee hearings on the threat of computerized information to individual privacy. The lead witness was Arthur R. Miller, whose pioneering and thoroughly documented account of this threat—including information on the recently-revealed Army surveillance of United States citizens—is now available.

"Without trying to frighten us into a paranoiac reaction, [Miller] fairly lays out the often indecent attitudes toward personal privacy that we can expect from information-gatherers. . . . *The Assault on Privacy* is a real public service."—Robert Sherrill, *New York Times Book Review*

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—Ralph Nader

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led him to conclude: 1) that the road could not be built as designed, and 2) that large overruns would result. Nevertheless, Morrison-Knudsen commenced work.

Open conflict set in at the construction site when Morrison-Knudsen demanded that the monthly payroll be amended to include charges for slide removal. (The slides were so bad that 31 men were killed on the road.) Pettis refused on the grounds that such payments were not called for by the contract and that the Peruvian government would lose a great deal of money by such actions. "At first, Brown & Root supported me," says Pettis, "but they had a big meeting in February of 1968 and the tables began to turn. Bert Perkins of Morrison-Knudsen said he bid the job low because of prior association with Brown & Root all over the world—and because they expected to get a break. I'm sort of hot-tempered and old-fashioned in things like that, and I said I wouldn't be a party to such a thing."

Brown & Root soon ordered Pettis to begin boosting the payroll—out of fear that Morrison-Knudsen might otherwise attack the flimsy design, or perhaps out of corporate fraternal understanding. When Pettis would not go along, he was replaced by a more pliable man named B. W. Donelson—who promptly began authorizing supplementary payments to the contractor. Donelson brought an element of the old Yankee *bandido* to the plot by obtaining a subcontract from Morrison-Knudsen to feed the workers. By cutting food costs, he was able to harvest a profit of some $250,000 from the very contract that he was overseeing. He also managed to divert about 25 Peruvian laborers from the road to work on the construction of his private home. Donelson is now wanted by the Peruvian government on these (and several other) charges of fraud, but he has vanished into the continent like Martin Bormann.

In December of 1968, Brown & Root fired Pettis after he refused to reassure the Peruvian government in exchange for "any other job in Latin America." Peru had stopped payment on the road largely because Pettis would not tell the transportation ministry that the road was being constructed properly or the payroll figured honestly. Enormous psychological pressure was mounted against Pettis by the Americans to get him to recant. "There were a lot of little things that really add up to make you feel isolated," he says. "For example, the contractor people's kids threw eggs at my kids and would have nothing to do with them. And the American Consul in Lima gave me a temporary passport and said it was a bureaucratic error."

Pettis has been without salary since December of 1968, and more than a half dozen job offers have been "suddenly cancelled," he says. "Every firm in the business considers me a 'rat.' " When he asked his lawyer to talk with Brown & Root about a possible breach of contract suit, the attorney wrote back that the company's position "seems to be that your first duty was to the Brown & Root 'team' rather than to the Peruvian government, and that by your actions you violated this duty."

Pettis and his wife are in the process of moving to Spain, where they hope to set up a small school. He is rather bitter about the whole conflict in Peru: "This is the kind of thing that's ruining the United States all over the world. We look like a bunch of crooks, and anyone who tells the truth about it is considered crazy. I feel that when an engineer takes a job like that highway, he has to protect his client. I hate this thing of costs being $8 or $10 million above the contract. You've got to stand up against the pressures on that kind of thing to live with yourself. You sure won't make much money that way—I mean what the hell did I have to gain out of this?—but you have to do it. Looking back on it, I believe that I would do the same thing again. You really have no choice. But if you ask

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my wife, she would say no."

Meanwhile, construction on the highway has halted, with a huge wastage of funds, and the Brown & Root image in Latin America has been tarnished—as has the reputation of AID. But this scrape has not prevented further partnership between the company and the government. For example, Brown & Root and Morrison-Knudsen head a construction consortium that obtained a contract in February to upgrade the Tiger Cages at Con Son prison in South Vietnam. Two hundred eighty-eight "isolation cells" are to be built for $400,000 with labor problems being eased by a provision for the use of prisoners on the job.

JAMES BOYD

The shrillest, most piercing whistle of the 1960s was blown by James Boyd and three associates in the office of Senator Thomas J. Dodd. Boyd had been the Senator's closest aide over a 12-year career when he began noticing financial wheeling between Dodd and large contributors during the 1964 reelection campaign.

As a result, Boyd and a secretary named Marjorie Carpenter (whom he later married) resolved to leave after the campaign. The two had planned to exit quietly and loyally, but when they discovered more details of Dodd's unethical election dealings, they began to consider going public.

After detecting their disenchantment and signs of snooping in the records, Dodd fired both plotters before they had firmly seized the whistle. Then, the Senator flexed his political muscles by denying his aide employment elsewhere in Washington and exercised his personal power by playing with Boyd, alternately offering him his old job back and chastising him for disloyalty. The way Dodd treated Boyd was the final act required for his public exposure.

"We didn't want to fight him," recalls Boyd. "I had been very close to him personally over a period of years, and the loyalty thing is one of the strongest of the Hill's ties. Also, being an Administrative Assistant is a nice life in many ways. I mean he did what I asked him to 90 per cent of the time, and that makes you feel significant. You *are* significant. The campaign fund diversion in 1964 was bad, but it took Dodd's malevolence to make his actions real, not abstract. I felt small and like I was being toyed with for the first time since I was in the Marine Corps. He was really hurting people and then abusing his power over me to cover up his abuses of the public. Still, there was nothing ennobling in the decision to sink my teeth into Dodd and hold on until one

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of us lost. It was one of those times when you think you are right but you still feel horrible."

For a full seven months after they were fired, Jim Boyd and Marjorie Carpenter agonized and vacillated over whether to expose Dodd and, if so, how. "We shifted from day to day," he says, "overwhelmed by the unlikelihood of it all. We kept wondering 'who are we to take him on?' And there was always a fear of looking naive—of summoning up a burst of moralism and then having everyone laugh and say that's just the way things are done."

Finally, the conspirators decided to go public. In a Topkapi-style caper, the Boyd-Carpenter team removed about 7,000 documents from Dodd's office for Xeroxing, documents that formed the basis for 23 Pearson-Anderson columns. The whistle was formally blown, although *The Washington Post* got off to a late start by suppressing the first two columns and then running edited versions of the others only after Drew Pearson pressured the editors into lifting their news embargo.

The impact of the exposure took a long time to really hit Senator Dodd. At first, congressional cohesion was remarkable. Liberal Senator Birch Bayh wrote Dodd: "We're all with you on this yellow attack by Pearson." And conservative Russell Long remarked, "I'll support you all the way on this, Tom, even if you're guilty." Congressmen and senators united around their community of interest—that is, around their universal fear of having facts about them exposed by rebellious staff members—to focus their scorn on the "stool pigeon" question and on the probable chromosome mutations of traitors to the Congress. But finally, the pressure was too much, and Dodd was censured by the Senate on June 23, 1967.

The backlash against the whistleblowers, however, was much swifter. Marjorie Carpenter received support from her new employers, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, but she resigned when her new fame produced strain and apprehension within the organization. And Boyd quickly lost his job as a part-time speechwriter for a House subcommittee under Congressman John Blatnick. Blatnick, while sympathetic, explained that he had no choice because committee Chairman George Fallon had cut his staff budget by one position's salary—reportedly at the behest of Speaker John McCormack, who may have been moved by the treachery against his good friend, Tom Dodd. Boyd wrote a book, *Above the Law*, in 1967, and did some ghostwriting, but he did not receive full-time employment until maverick foundation man Philip Stern hired him in September, 1968—almost four years after he left Dodd and almost three years after the first Pearson column.

While the case against Senator Dodd was being methodically detailed, official Washington promptly demonstrated how much it matters who you are in a conflict of the whistle. Boyd offered 7,000 documents to the FBI for a possible investigation of a variety of charges against Dodd. The august Bureau declined an investigation and launched a probe of *Boyd*, not excluding his private life. The supply of rumors was ample, complete with stories that the conspirators were sex offenders and that they had been paid by Pearson (or Dodd's political enemies) to unearth their volumes of dirt.

The Dodd episode was certainly not remunerative for Jim Boyd and his colleagues, nor did it win them great public appreciation. And their exposure did not provoke a general reform movement in the Senate. Dodd's honor was thoroughly soiled, but he retained his committee posts, his seniority, served three more years in the Senate, and ran for a third term in 1970. (It was not out of the question for him to have won.) In short, Boyd and his friends paid a high price and the public really gained little. Nevertheless, Boyd is not sorry. "It

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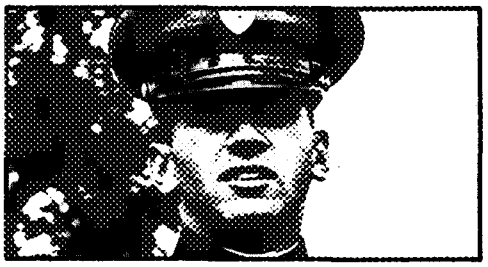
was the greatest liberating experience of my life," he observes. "It cut away all sorts of restrictions and taboos that kept me from saying what I think honestly. What a Senate aide does is to promote the image of a politician, selling out little by little in rational, absolutely essential steps. I didn't realize what 12 years like that can do to you, even after we decided to expose Senator Dodd. It was the fight itself that opened my eyes to all this."

These are strange feelings for a man of modest origins in Connecticut —a non-ideologue and non-movement person who seized an opportunity to work up through the grime of politics in the 50s after starting as a stamp-licker and errand boy. He made only a minor dent in the ethic and power of the organization man, but he escaped the syndrome himself.



LIEUTENANT LOUIS FONT

Perhaps the most delicately skillful whistle-blowing in recent years has been performed by Army Lieutenant Louis P. Font. A middle-American Eagle Scout from Kansas City, he achieved a life-long ambition by winning a place at West Point—where he graduated in the top five per cent of his class in 1968. He won a two-year scholarship to Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Politics, and commingled there with people concerned about the war (including Henry Kissinger). "My views against the war hardened at Harvard," remembers Font, "but they had already begun to change in my last year at the Academy. For three years I had ranked in the top quarter of my class in 'military aptitude,' which is essentially a peer-group conformity rating. But by the end of my senior year, I was in the bottom quarter because I started reading about the politics of the war instead of its tactics. The key word at West Point is 'attitude,' and when you start thinking too much—or want to go to graduate school—the social chemistry goes bad and you become an outcast. I supported Robert Kennedy, and people told me he was a traitor."

On February 27, 1970, the Harvard Lieutenant became the first West Point graduate in history to apply for discharge as a conscientious objector. Two weeks later the Army ordered him to leave Harvard and report to First Army Headquarters at Fort Meade, Maryland. The Army rejected his application in June, stating that he failed because he lacked sincerity and because he objected to the Vietnam war in particular and not to all war. "It really disturbed me that they ruled I lacked sincerity," says Font. So he went to court seeking an order for his discharge. The judge turned him down on the grounds that selective objection was not legally established, but he did find the Lieutenant sincere and ordered the Army to give him a "meaningful job" at Fort Meade pending the outcome of his appeal. Then the real battle began.

"The Army thought that I would go back to my old West Point self at Fort Meade—away from all those hippies at Harvard," says Font. "And if that didn't work, they wanted me to wait quietly through my appeal so that they could order me to 'Nam if it failed. That would force me to stand a rough court martial, and I would be an example that would discourage dissent. But I want no part of this war or this Army. The war is immoral, and the Army is fat and corrupt. And when you're dealing with the Armed Forces, it's all or nothing. If you just do half-way stuff—sitting around, not screaming—they'll win every time. They'll transfer you or wear you down and break you somehow."

So Lieutenant Font began his counterattack. One of his jobs was to

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help new officers find off-base housing. After two or three reports on racial discrimination produced no action, he leaked the evidence to the press and the story produced a sizable stink. "They really freak out around here when stuff like that hits the papers," he said. "They know it's right, and it flies right into the face of the volunteer army campaign to make things sound rosy." The Fort Meade command then switched Font to another job and ordered him not to speak to the press. Soon he found himself inspecting the enlisted men's barracks, and he began collecting affidavits about rats, roaches, the absence of hot water, faulty sewage, broken windows and walls, and general dilapidation. He secured a medical opinion that some of the barracks were "unfit for human habitation." After several of his reports were routinely filed away, he sent copies of one to several senators and congressmen in January (a serviceman is guaranteed the right to communicate with members of Congress). They then turned the information over to the press, and the Fort Meade brass got burned again—looking rather foolish to the Pentagon, where generals no doubt wondered why the First Army couldn't control its officers and prohibit such embarrassment.

This proved too much for Major General R. G. Ciccolella, the First Army Chief of Staff. When Font arrived at headquarters to deliver a copy of his report to the top three generals ("Always go as high as you can with complaints. That way they can't deny knowing about the problems."), Ciccolella ordered him arrested. Font was charged with five ludicrous offenses (example: failing to secure the permission of a building's "commander" before entering), each of which could earn him five years in the stockade. The Lieutenant countered by charging Ciccolella with assault and battery during the headquarters incident.

Ciccolella, by the way, has a reputation for impetuous outbursts. A fiery stump of a man, he was assigned to Fort Meade after his public utterances as Chief of the U. S. Military Assistance Advisory Group on Taiwan made people somewhat nervous lest he unleash himself on the mainland. Fort Meade, in fact, is something of a haven for such generals, who must, of course, be assigned somewhere. The Fort also houses Major General Samuel W. Koster, the commader of the Americal Division at the time of Mylai, and Lt. General Jonathan Seaman, who cleared Koster of Mylai charges. Font further muddied the legal waters by charging the latter two generals with war crimes. For good measure he charged Post Commander Colonel A. W. Alexander with dereliction of duty because of the barracks conditions. Since these officers are the same men who will be responsible for Font's court martial, questions of legal prejudice could drag the litigation out interminably. Furthermore, the Army now stands in danger of violating a court order—because Font now has no job at all, much less a "meaningful"one.

"The whole discipline of the Army is based on placing each man in a Catch-22 situation so that no matter what he does, he's screwed," reasoned Font. "When that helplessness is driven home, he becomes docile and manageable. I have the Army in a kind of reverse Catch-22. They don't want to get rid of me and yet they do. If they give me a job, they lose, because there's so much corruption everywhere that I'll find something wrong. If they don't give me a job, I'll hit them with the court order.

"You have two main advantages in fighting the Army as compared with a civilian bureaucracy," he continued. "First, Army officers react sharply and often foolishly to exposure. If General Ciccolella had taken my barracks report and said, 'Well done, Lieutenant Font, I'm placing you in charge of a 12-man committee to study this problem and design programs for solving it,' he would have had me, especially in the press. Instead, he

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reacted like an officer—instinctively covering up because he knew he was responsible—and he made a mistake. The second advantage is that the Army wants desperately to keep people in, whereas other bureaucracies want to keep themselves pure and don't mind firing dissidents. The first desire of an organization is to get rid of someone like me. But that's exactly what I want—out."

The Army and Lieutenant Font remain locked in psychological combat. For reasons of policy, and perhaps as retribution for the trouble he has caused, the Army brass would like to wait out all the litigation and possibly make Font an example of the futility of resistance. On the other hand, Font's deft application of his whistle promises further scandal, more damaged reputations, lost promotions, and probably additional lawsuits. He doesn't lack material because he has achieved status as an unofficial ombudsman. ("Solzhenitsyn says a writer is like another government," remarked Font. "In my own little way, I'm like another chain of command. People come to me with injustices because they know their superiors won't do anything.") For a time, it looked as though the Lieutenant had the upper hand: on February 23, 1971, the Army initiated proceedings to "eliminate" Font from the service due to substandard performance of duty. It is now unclear, however, whether this procedure will be carried through.*

Lieutenant Font's own psychological watershed is long past, having occurred over the decision to apply for conscientious objector status. The prelude to whistle-blowing is often like the agony of facing the draft or a service commitment—with similar fears and social pressures upon dissenters. Font really avoided the problem of strong loyalty to the traditions and associations of West Point by building new ties at Harvard. "My real loyalties are to my conscience and my friends at Cambridge," he says, "not to the Academy or to the Army. As far as I am concerned, I am still a civilian." Once he made the choice to make the stockade a higher priority than going to Vietnam, it became progressively easier to fight the Army with everything he had learned at West Point. "But I don't know what would have happened if I hadn't had those two years at Harvard," he mused. "I might have gone crazy."

*While this article was at the press, Font was discharged for "substandard performance of duty," on April 12.

JACQUELINE VERRETT

Unlike Lieutenant Font, the vast majority of potential whistle-blowers are most emphatically not seeking discharge from their livelihood. In fact, the inhibitions of the purse have probably caused more whistles to be swallowed than any other single factor, with a specially crushing effect on those having families and obligations. The question of survival against reprisals therefore assumes critical importance, and the most successful public clarion in this regard has been Dr. Jacqueline Verrett of Health, Education and Welfare's Food and Drug Administration.

For a dozen years, Dr. Verrett has been pumping chicken eggs full of the molecular polyglots that are added to American food to make it look better, last longer, and—above all—cost less. A pioneer in the chick embryo testing method for food additives, biochemist Verrett became disturbed when her tests showed that cyclamates caused substantial, grotesque deformities inside the eggs. She began reporting these findings through FDA channels on March 7, 1968, and continued to bring them up in meetings, memos,

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and her semi-annual reports.

By the fall of 1969, the cyclamate findings were being talked about in scientific circles—based on Dr. Verrett's research and parallel findings elsewhere. So she was not terribly surprised when NBC's Paul Friedman asked for an interview in late September (having seen a column on cyclamate research by Jean Carper). "The cyclamate publicity had been going on for some time," says Dr. Verrett, "and I didn't think the NBC interview was any big deal. I kind of backed into this controversy."

When she sought routine clearance for the interview, Dr. Verrett's office was suddenly beseiged with about a dozen lab-coated and administrative officials of FDA—an unprecedented gathering. They earnestly remonstrated with her to forego the interview because of the "undue public alarm" that would no doubt arise if her deformed embryos were to appear on the TV screens of the cyclamate-consuming masses. This concern appeared to spring from a double-standard in FDA on both test results and media policy. In the summer of 1969, for example, Dr. Verrett had produced a preliminary study of another suspect additive, monosodium glutamate (MSG), using only 180 eggs. Although she found no harmful effects, she emphasized that the test was in no way conclusive. Nevertheless, FDA Commissioner Herbert Ley rushed to Congress and hailed the "exquisite, sensitive, new toxicological approach" that found MSG as safe as (old-fashioned) apple pie. The cyclamate data, by contrast, came from a thorough investigation which used about 13,000 eggs and established a definite causal relationship between the chemical and embryo deformities. Yet cyclamates remained officially safe and no one rushed to Congress—only to Dr. Verrett's office to head off public panic.

Dr. Verrett withstood the pressure and proceeded with the NBC interview. "It's taxpayers' money and taxpayers' research here," says the biochemist, "so I believe that the public is entitled to know about the results—especially if you are careful not to overstate the conclusions. I give the American public credit for taking information for what it's worth. As far as I know, there was no great public alarm about cyclamates. The only great alarm took place in the Secretary's office."

Indeed, there was some commotion in Secretary Finch's office. He was soon visited by Donald Kendall, president of the Pepsi-Cola Company and friend to President Nixon. Having no doubt consumed large quantities of his own cyclamate-laden soft drink, Kendall was perhaps concerned about his health and in any case sought assurances from higher authorities than Dr. Verrett that the additive was as safe as MSG. Finch was also contacted by representatives of Abbott Laboratories, the major producer of cyclamates and a regular participant in health disasters. (The latest Abbott episode occurred in March, when some of its intravenous fluids were recalled from hospitals upon discovery of contamination. According to Morton Mintz of *The Washington Post*, a survey of 21 hospitals out of some 3,000 supplied by Abbott revealed 350 cases of blood poisoning—including nine fatal ones—connected with the fluids.)

The upshot of the cyclamate revelations was that the additive was removed from general use on October 18, 1969—not on the basis of FDA data, but because of a wondrously coincidental discovery of bladder cancer effects by Abbott. The effect upon Dr. Verrett was that she was twice censured by Secretary Finch for unethical conduct. Also, during the period between her NBC appearance and the announcement of the cyclamate ban, she was prohibited from granting interviews or even answering her office telephone.

Such direct criticism from a Cabinet officer is normally more than enough to focus agency enzymes on a low-level bureaucratic bacillus—and

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drive him from the government. Yet Dr. Verrett has survived. "I'm still kind of a leper around here, though, if you want to know the truth," she said. "I'm called to some meetings if it's absolutely necessary, but that's about it."

Her bureaucratic afterlife probably stems from an odd combination of circumstances. For one thing, at present her skills are almost indispensable to FDA because a great many additives are to be tested in the near future as a result of consumer pressure; and, ironically, her chick embryo method has been determined to be the best for rapid screen-testing. Also, her testing unit is unusually independent, which means that she can work effectively even in bureaucratic isolation. Most other government employees at her level would become helpless and frustrated without the active cooperation of many associates working toward group solutions. Finally, she has some support from the Congress, including Senator Warren Magnuson. None of this means that Dr. Verrett is guaranteed eternal life at FDA, of course. In fact, she may face danger in the current plan to expand the chick embryo facilities and move them to Pine Bluff, Arkansas, when all the nerve gas and biological toxins are swept out there. That plan will require reorganization, and reorganizations are notoriously useful for "streamlining" personnel.

In the meantime, Dr. Verrett is cheerfully injecting additives into chicken eggs, although her overall outlook does not inspire much chemical confidence in the American diet. "I can't say that I'm very optimistic about our effect here," she said. "There is a kind of tightening up and restriction that is pro-industry and anti-consumer. In some ways, we are worse off than we were a year and a half ago.

"And one sad thing is that you have to get really dramatic test results to have any hope of making an impact. If thalidomide had caused mental retardation, for example, I think we would still be using it," she lamented while lighting up another cigarette. "I'm not too worried about smoking these things. The additives may get me first."

ERNEST FITZGERALD

Ernest Fitzgerald, whose exposure of a $2 billion overrun on the Air Force C-5A contract earned him the most expensive whistle yet recorded, is more typical than Dr. Verrett of the organizational maverick's life expectancy. Immediately after his testimony before Senator Proxmire's Joint Subcommittee on Economy in Government in November, 1968, Fitzgerald was removed from his tasks of overseeing costs on major weapons programs and reassigned to audit functions on bowling alleys. His civil service tenure was rescinded, and the Pentagon's Office of Special Investigations began a probe into his background. This investigation, under Brigadier General Joseph Capucci, resulted in a thick file of unfavorable comment from informers identified only as T1, T2, T3, and T4. (One of these said that Fitzgerald's old Rambler marked him as a "penny-pincher.") Jack Anderson ran a special report attacking the Capucci file in December, 1969, but it was not widely seen in Washington because *The Washington Post* refused to print it. Meanwhile, Fitzgerald contracted a normal case of foul organizational halitosis, with the result that his fellow employees talked a lot about him but not to him. "I just wasn't invited to meetings anymore," he says. "Isolation is the standard treatment. I can't think of anything that was invented just for me. Maybe a half dozen of my close friends kept

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up contact, but their careers haven't gone anywhere either. Everything changed very quickly."

About a year after his first testimony on the C-5A, Fitzgerald's office underwent a reorganization and his job was abolished. Air Force officials defended this severance as an "economy move" before the Congress—with straight faces—and they withstood the questioning of incredulous Congressmen who criticized them for focusing their budgetary scissors on Fitzgerald rather than on his disclosures regarding the C-5A. The flap over the dismissal was rough, but the Air Force survived and those who handled the affair were promoted. Fitzgerald himself is now a part-time consultant to the Joint Economic Committee, with a decidedly dim future in his career field of cost management for manufacturers. "In fact, my consulting career out there is over for good," he says.

While not surprised that the majority of the uniformed Air Force and Lockheed personnel despised his deeds, Fitzgerald was a bit chagrined at the response of the "defense liberals" and leftover whiz kids.

"The liberal people in the Pentagon said that excess costs came from a deliberate policy of achieving goals other than efficiency," continued Fitzgerald. "They said it was all a welfare push based on humanism and reordered national priorities and that such things had to be sold to Congress disguised as weapons systems. Those goals are all right with me, but I don't think social reform should be accomplished by constructing a vast middle-class WPA through the Pentagon. Nor should you do it with concealment and lying before Congress."

One former high Air Force official reflected the disenchantment with Fitzgerald's methods. "I think the sense of annoyance with Fitzgerald really came from the complexity of the C-5A issue. His charges were so blunt that his motives were called into question. I'm not suggesting that he was wrong, but I do think you should make every effort to work things out internally before you blow the sides out of an organization."

Like Dr. Verrett, Fitzgerald's initial decision to speak before Congress was not preceded by lengthy soul-searching. Perhaps he did not foresee the vitality of the Air Force reaction, but the major reason for his relative nonchalance about the decision seems to be his straightforward, somewhat homespun nature. A dedicated waste-hater, he told them what he knew when they asked. The tactics of Air Force retaliation—especially the Capucci gumshoes act—hardened his resolve not to back down from the correct figures.

JOHN McGEE

Most whistle-blowers receive treatment in the Fitzgerald mold, but without the notoriety. Take John M. McGee, for example. A middle-level engineer, he went to Bangkok in May, 1967, to monitor the delivery of petroleum, oil, and lubricants (POL) to Thailand and South Vietnam for the Navy Fuel Supply Office. He immediately began complaining to his supervisor, Arlie Rankin, that huge quantities of petroleum were being stolen for a well-organized black market because of a lax and corrupt system of invoice controls. "He told me that everything had gone smoothly before I arrived, and that he would have me fired if I caused any trouble," said McGee. "That's when we began to develop personality differences, because I wanted to get an investigation into the whole mess. The delivery system is so big and confusing that even the officials don't really know who's responsible."

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Things deteriorated rapidly after McGee wrote the Navy Fuel Supply Office in Washington and requested (without success) that headquarters look into the monitoring system. Supervisor Rankin finally took the highly unorthodox step of ordering McGee to stay out of his office (where the records were kept) and to communicate only in postmarked letters. "It's kind of funny, looking back on it," says McGee, "but at the time I didn't think so. I mean, here were two grown men working closely together on a multi-million dollar operation and playing like little kids. We saw each other every day but business had to be conducted by mail, with big postal delays. One week he wrote me 17 letters and I had to reply. Pretty soon I got fed up and complained to him, in a letter, that our communications system was 'gobbledy-gook.' Then he cited me for disrespect in an official letter of reprimand, on the grounds that I had called his correspondence system 'gobbledy-gook.' "

This document, known as the "gobbledy-gook reprimand," was appealed up through the NFSO personnel command, but the appeal was not acted upon. McGee appealed through grievance channels to the Commanding Officer of the NFSO, Captain Richard Jones, for an investigation of the POL system and was turned down. He then asked for an investigation by the Air Force Office of Special Investigations, which did probe the matter but classified its report and filed it away. He then wrote for help from the Civil Service Commission, which declined and termed the matter a "personality disagreement" after consulting—in standard procedure—McGee's supervisor. Finally, McGee received a personal visit from an authorized representative of the NFSO Commanding Officer who delivered a "resign or be fired" ultimatum.

"That was the real turning point," recalls. McGee. "Resigning would have meant breach of contract, and I would have been required to pay for transporting my family and belongings back to the States—and to reimburse the Navy for sending me over. Getting fired would have meant that I couldn't expect to get another job. I would have had to buckle under and do what they wanted, except that I tape recorded the ultimatum conversation, and the guy really hit the ceiling when I told him because he knew the ultimatum was illegal."

In March, 1968, John McGee, disabled war veteran with a soft country accent, who "just wanted to get to the bottom of this"—blew the whistle by writing a letter to Senator William Proxmire. The Senator demanded an investigation by the General Accounting Office, and a preliminary report showed that 52 per cent of all petroleum deliveries to Thailand (about 5.5 million gallons) had been stolen over a 10-month period in 1967. The situation looked worse in South Vietnam. The GAO released a more complete report on July 28, 1970, which detailed the techniques of theft and the weaknesses of control. Although both the oil companies and the government agencies are required to keep records for inspection, the GAO study was limited and contained no precise estimates of the problem "because of the nonavailability of knowledgeable personnel and of pertinent records pertaining to POL activities in Southeast Asia. . . ." The petroleum thefts were carried on by organized rings of truck drivers and others, who sold the goods on the black market. They did very well. So did the American oil companies, because the government was forced to step up its POL orders to make up for the stolen quantities. Everyone was getting along nicely except the public, a critical but distant party to the arrangement. And the public didn't seem to mind, which is why McGee looked so foolish when he rocked the boat on the taxpayers' behalf.

Having exposed a major scandal against the public interest, John McGee received the whistle-blower's reward and was transferred to Wash-

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ington, where he was filed away in the bureaucracy. "I didn't have any job or any duties," he said. "I just occupied a desk. I read the *Post* in the morning and the *Daily News* in the afternoon." After more than six months of these tasks, he was again transferred in June, 1969, to a bureaucratic Siberia substitute at Pensacola, Florida. This took place on the direct order of Secretary of the Navy John Chafee, reacting to severe pressure from Senators Proxmire and Montoya. McGee arrived in Pensacola and was assigned to a nonexistent program, which required him only to keep up with correspondence regarding its proposed birth. The program, which McGee believes is good one, began a little more than a year later; but it is still in preliminary snarls, understaffed, and beset with all the problems of low priority.

"I am still radioactive around here," says McGee. "I have been for more than three years. Once you go outside with criticism, that happens to you. The people down here are afraid that I'll find some small skeletons in their closet. No matter how much I try to explain the circumstances of the petroleum incident, they still think I'm a risk. And most of the people resent me, too. They know that Secretary Chafee put me down here, and they believe that I got my job because of political pull with Senators—that I'm a privileged character. It's no fun, but your skin gets pretty thick after awhile."

John McGee plans to stick it out with the government because he has so many years invested toward retirement and because he can't get a good job recommendation. He is discouraged that his actions and the GAO reports have not really cleaned up the POL delivery system in Southeast Asia.

Of course, McGee's controversy concerned a relatively major scandal, though small compared to the C-5A, and the GAO reports actually took it to the back pages of some newspapers. Nothing at all is heard about more puny fish. "There is no telling the number of people who get quick medical discharges after they make waves or speak out," says B. B. Bray, staff director and federal employee ombudsman for a House subcommittee. "They get sent to a psychiatrist and then out, or they get reorganized. The personnel people say well he's got a file this thick, which indicates that he has a poor personality, a bad disposition, and that nobody can get along with him.

"Things haven't gotten a bit better in the last 10 years, and maybe worse," he continued. "The system is such that responsibility never gets pinned down to those people who hurt the public. Not only do they fire the complainants, but they get promoted. There is a cancerous element in these things: the agencies are more interested in finding out who complained than in the substance of the complaint. The Pentagon will spend a thousand dollars to cover up a nickel error, and the other departments aren't much better. I've talked to an awful lot of employees who are afraid of becoming another Fitzgerald."

You Can't Go Home to Monticello

Job vulnerability is obviously a critical psychological factor in the mind of a potential whistle-blower, and it will probably become more so as large organizations come to dominate an increasing portion of the nation's employment. The modern jilted employee can no longer return to Monticello or become a self-made husbandman with ease. If he becomes a damaged good, tainted by a reputation as an organizational squealer, he may find so many doors locked that a drop in station or a change in profession will be required for grocery money.

And the organization's position makes some sense, too. The bosses don't really like to be lectured by a middle-level technocrat, for it wounds their pride and jars their sense of place on the great chain of being. Also, a

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certain amount of cohesion does seem necessary to operate a large organization. But most important, the disloyal employee can hurt the collective interest of the organization by damaging its *image*, the public face on which an appropriation usually depends.

There is little doubt that organizations will continue to react hostilely to blowers of the whistle—or that the employee will continue to have difficulty finding alternative work. The legal rights of the jobholder are meager in this regard, since the courts generally hold that employees are not protected for public utterances which impair the "special relationship" in the office or which promote "disharmony and inefficiency." Basically this means that the employee may not make remarks which injure the atmosphere at work. This is a broad area of course, but the courts have interpreted it to mean that employee's criticism becomes less protected as it concerns matters closer to his job responsibilities. The whistle-blower will be the last to be afforded license on this scale, because he flies right into the eye of the storm.

Beyond the question of vulnerability is the question of *effectiveness*, an idea which is especially inhibitive upon people on the rise in an organization. It is no accident that most whistle-blowers have reached a career plateau—a point at which they can no longer stifle their whistle in the honest hope of attaining a pinnacle some day from which they can *really* clean things up. One of the truly seductive capacities of an organization follows from the young person's conviction that he can do more tomorrow and tomorrow—by which time, of course, he has so much invested and is so dependent that principled impulses are forgotten or dismissed with a sigh. In a fundamental sense, whistle-blowing takes you out of the stream and closes off options.

And the effectiveness trap is woven together with the instinct of group loyalty to produce a powerful psychological block against the whistle. Something deep in the character of decent people revolts at the thought of exposing an employer's failure. It is unseemly. It smacks of muckraking, looking on the negative side, and grandstanding. It is associated with scandal sheets, zealots, and people who oversimplify the world into good and evil without room for the murky truth. All these attitudes are epitomized in the organization man, but they are real. They are so powerful, in fact, that many government employees have fought to the wall and bitten back their consciences without even giving a thought to going public. They are best illustrated by people who have rejected the whistle.

Swallowing the Whistle

After the invasion of Cambodia last spring, word slowly got out around Washington that Anthony Lake, Roger Morris, and William Watts—three top members of Henry Kissinger's National Security Council staff—were leaving the Administration because of basic policy disagreements. There were no press conferences, statements, background conversations, or letters of conscience leaked to the press. The only publicity consisted of a few isolated, "insider" columns—praising the courage of the men for leaving and marveling at the decorum, mutual amicability, and lack of embarrassment with which the separation was accomplished. It was, in short, the way one should resign.

The whistle was spurned for various reasons. William Watts—who, as staff secretary to the Council, sat in on most top-level policy meetings regarding the war—emphasizes the protection of the President's capacity to govern as a reason for reticence. "I have an enormous respect for the office of the President," he said recently, "and I just think that man has got to have enough confidence in his staff so that he doesn't have to worry that they will betray confidences or attack him in the press. Presidents are paranoid enough

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already. All the problems of running the country converge in that Oval Office, and I believe you should make every effort not to make those problems more difficult. The whole country was about to fall apart after Cambodia anyway, so all we really had was an irresponsible potential to create greater discord. We could have built up some public brownie points with self-serving publicity—and made a lot of money, too. But we would have been playing God with some of the very basics of how the society runs itself.

"Besides, the possibility of our influencing the policy was absolutely minimal," he continued. "If we had been Cabinet members or even sub-Cabinet members, our resignations might have had some impact—but not staff members, no matter how important we like to think we are. Sure, we may have made a slight dent in the public belief that the President is right by virtue of his superior information. We could have said that we had seen almost the same intelligence and could not in conscience support the policy, but that came out in the stories anyway. I never gave more than a passing thought to really going public, having made up my mind about publicity before I took the job."

Watts also spoke of personal loyalty to Henry Kissinger, but this factor was dwelled upon much more by another member of the trio, Roger Morris. "The main reason I did not want to go public was that I have intense admiration and sympathy for Henry," he said. "I think he is head and shoulders above anyone else at that level. He had been kind to us and very open about things. When you've lived with the complications and personalities of a policy, it's hard enough to totally disagree with it—much less make a personal break with friends you disagree with. We were in the anomalous position of being inside the Administration writing statements for Richard Nixon while our wives and friends were out on the Ellipse demonstrating against his policy. And I guess if you can't resign from the Nixon Administration, you can't resign from anything. But making a personal attack out of it is different, because you've seen the reasons and agonizing behind a man's public stance. We were in a position of trust, and I really didn't want to make life harder for Kissinger.

"My main motive in leaving was not to change the policy anyway. If I had wanted to do that, I would have stayed on and fought inside because the chances are that I would have been more effective there. But the price was too high personally to retain that effectiveness, and I really wanted to dissociate myself from the Cambodia decisions."

Watts and Morris are slightly ambivalent about whether whistle-blowing is a selfish act of pure gratification or a principled sacrifice of one's career. On one hand, they tend to see public exposure as a self-serving play for the quick headline, and yet they also recognize that it generally means professional disaster. "If we had gone public, we would have lost our credibility," said Morris, "and that's most of what you have. The foreign policy establishment punishes people whom they consider disloyal. It's more clubby than most others, and the members shun controversial outspoken people almost as if they were Charles Manson."

"I'd look very closely at a guy who walked out of there and shot his mouth off," agreed Watts. "If he did it once, he could do it again. It's really not a good thing to do in the long run."

Going public is taboo for the organization man because it appears self-seeking—far too openly so for a time when aggressive self-effacement is the key to success. This is an increasing dilemma for the whistle-blower, for an effective siren must be sounded so *loudly* to get attention that the ego will appear to have taken over and gone wild. This makes one appear almost like a vote-getting politician, and they are notoriously poor

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bureaucratic strategists.

Personal loyalties present one of the most genuine, perplexing problems of the whistle-blower. A friend who provides someone with a job and a personal confidence is not easy to denounce in public discourse, where you must be crudely for or against him. These complex human strings kept Jim Boyd paralyzed for seven months between his break with Senator Dodd and his pilfering of the records. And Boyd acknowledges that Dodd could still evoke almost a campaign spirit in him with tales of past experiences. When you understand someone (as Dostoyevsky understood Raskolnikov), with his foibles and weaknesses and jumbled motives for every decision, it's difficult to classify him as a public enemy and act accordingly. Boyd was helped over this threshold by Dodd's malevolence toward him. Kissinger's staff members were not.

The personal loyalty tie may help explain why high-level employees provide so few exposures. The average whistle-blower comes from the middle levels of the bureaucracy—high enough to have an overall picture of some pillage against the public interest (as opposed to the highly specialized or clerical workers below), and yet low enough to escape personal ties with those responsible for policy.

There is yet another unique factor in the decision of the Kissinger staff members: however violent their disagreement with Administration war policy, they did not believe it a *crime* like Dodd's corruption, McGee's petroleum theft, or Pettis' Latin American fraud. "Nixon wasn't getting any kickbacks in Cambodia," said Morris, "and Kissinger certainly wasn't in anybody's pay. It was a disagreement." Whistle-blowing is essentially a conservative action in the sense that you are bringing facts to light which on their face should provoke an adverse public reaction. John McGee was not trying to change people's minds about theft—he was merely exposing a situation that he found self-evidently wrong and harmful to the public. The Kissinger staff members would have played a true political role had they gone public, seeking to persuade people rather than to simply provide evidence.

The Fog of Responsibility

Actually, this distinction bodes ill for the future of whistle-blowing, because there is scarcely any public folly which more than 50 per cent of the citizenry will agree is a crime. Even the cover-up of the C-5A overrun was presented as a policy disagreement, and everything tends to slide on the disagreement side of the scale as relativism prevails. Furthermore, the responsibility question is becoming so diffuse and cloudy that many exposures die a natural death for lack of a clear target. This is true of every case discussed above except for the Boyd whistle, which is clearly off trend. The petroleum scandal, which hung in confusion until the outrage faded away, seems more typical. The resulting lack of effectiveness will no doubt be discouraging to potential followers of John McGee, who will mark both his plight and his lack of impact. The only advantage obtained by this diffusion of responsibility is that private fiefdoms of information tend to break down. Since Ralph Nader exposed the societal effects of corporate decisions, for example, people feel they have more of a right to know what corporations do—and the corporate whistle-blower is no longer a foreign idea. We are all involved, so we all have a right to know.

These complexities explain why the very term "whistle-blower" causes people to blanch in a room of Ivy Leaguers or other sophisticated people. It suggests that facts still explain themselves without needing the interpretive services of a professional task force. It suggests a clear division between right and wrong, with no hedged bets. In short, it seems like a throwback to simpler, bygone days.

This is partly a failure of the lan-

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guage. "Whistle-blowing" was impressed into service when no other phrase could be found that avoided the overtone of treason. The term suffers from the flippant image of its origin: the caricature of the bulbous-cheeked English Bobby wheezing away on his whistle when the maiden cries "stop thief." Daniel Berrigan once complained that the phrase "non-violence" fails to capture the sheer power of the peace philosophy. Similarly, "whistle-blowing" fails to capture the anguish and higher loyalties of the act.

Liberalism appears to be the real villain in this onslaught against the whistle-blower. It invented relativism and the concept of broad social responsibility to soften moralism and harsh individual accountability. And it invented the team player and the group ethic to take some of the evil sting out of social Darwinism. But bedrock conservatism played an equally villainous role by sanctifying the vested interest. All organizations mix these two brews. Businesses are increasingly run by team players—although the leaders do not like this compromise of the self-made man. And more liberal organizations like universities, foundations, and magazines are vested interests by their dependence on dividends, advertising, and taxes—although they like to consider these materialist sources even less than the businessmen enjoy contemplating their friendly cooperative management. So the rise of the organization transcends ideology. As a vested interest, the organization man dislikes the whistle-blower only when the whistle strikes home. As a team player, he dislikes Judas all the time.

This confusion and diffusion and failure certainly promises a hostile environment for the turncoats of the future, and yet there are some hopeful signs. For one thing, whistle-blowers have a good record—not of effectiveness, but of being right. And the situation has not deteriorated so much that people cannot recognize a gross injustice when the loyalists get rewarded for corruption while the mavericks get exiled for being honest. As long as people can read the Boyd story and recognize the potential for sloth in the establishment, there will be support for his courage. Looking at things negatively, there are more opportunities for the whistle because organizations are probably getting worse.

There is also a shifting of values underway—involving a poorer image of the vested interest and a broader loyalty to the public. The 1960s have loosened the bonds of the Organization Man and more people are now willing to dissent openly from the policies of their employers. Acting on this broader loyalty usually doesn't pay well (which is why it's a value change), but it can and has produced at least a grunt of response from the government and from corporations. The enormous receptivity to Ralph Nader's message is evidence of this change. Nader's approach is closely linked to whistle-blowing, partly because thus far it is also a kind of conservative radicalism: kicking institutions with their own standards and trying to make them cease their exploitation of the public.

There are promising variations on the theme—such as the "secret patriot" approach, in which employees plot with public interest groups or with members of the press, who then provide a substitute exposure. And growing numbers of people are first cousins to the whistle-blower—people who let it be known that their loyalty is to what the organization should be and who are constantly prepared to quit or be fired to uphold that loyalty.

The full-fledged exposure from within, however, will continue to be rare. It will probably still spring from a combination of raw scandal, courage, and odd circumstance like the McGee tape and Font trip to Harvard. And, ultimately, the whistle-blower will still be a very extraordinary person. In the era of team players, that is both his virtue and his curse.■

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THE WAR COMES HOME

WE ARE RIGHT SMACK IN THE MIDDLE OF A HEROIN EPIDEMIC

This lethal powder—the "white death"—has spread to all levels of American society, with the syringe becoming as much a part of suburbia as the Saturday afternoon barbecue. There are half a million addicts walking the streets right now. They will spend $15 million today feeding their habit. They'll get more than half this money from crimes they'll commit in the big cities. One of every four of these addicts is a teenager, and for the 18-35 age group, heroin overdoses have become a major cause of death.

This is terrifying. But it isn't news. Every time you turn on the TV or pick up the newspaper you hear about heroin. Senators rise regularly to read grim statistics into the Congressional Record. President Nixon himself has spoken somberly about the way heroin is stalking our streets with "pandemic virulence."

But all this talk isn't going to change things. Neither is sending Henry Kissinger to Turkey to see what can be done about the Middle East opium field. And the President probably knows it. The heroin problem is going to get worse, with more young people becoming addicted and dying, until the U.S. gets out of Southeast Asia. Heroin and the War are connected with a horrible symbiosis.

In its May issue, Ramparts magazine tells the shocking story of the New Opium War:

- how clandestine CIA involvement in the parapolitics of Southeast Asia has allowed this area to produce 80% of the world's opium, replacing the Middle East as the major source of heroin.
- how a U.S.-sponsored network of anti-communists—Meo tribesmen in Laos, nationalist Chinese guerrillas and Burmese border police—participate in the opium harvest, in its processing into heroin and transportation to checkpoints throughout Indochina and finally to the U.S.
- how the major figures in South Vietnam's government—from Diem and Madame Nhu in the past to Nguyen Cao Ky today—have profited from the heroin traffic with tacit American support.
- how Saigon has become a major stop along this new heroin route, with up to 20% of some American GI platoons coming home addicts and at least one soldier a day dying from overdoses.

"The New Opium War" is another example of how the war comes home, wrapped in lies and distortions and bringing chaos with it. It is also another page in Ramparts coverage of the ever-deepening U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia. We began in 1966 (before opposition to the war was fashionable) with the expose of the joint efforts of Michigan State University and the CIA to set up the Diem regime. We will continue until the killing is over.

If you want to know more about it, read our May issue, on sale now. Or better yet, take an introductory subscription: 10 issues for $4.75 (regular price $7), which we will begin with our current issue containing the opium story. Let us throw in, free, a copy of "2, 3, Many Vietnams", by the editors of Ramparts (Canfield Press, $3.95). That makes the deal worth about $12, but it's yours for $4.75, saving you over 60%.

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CONFERENCE ON CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

May 12 & 13 1971
Shoreham Hotel Washington D.C.

PROFITS AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST

It used to be that a company could get by with occasionally sponsoring Shakespeare on television or with a few pages of annual report pleasantries about consumers, fair employment, and the environment. But not in the 1970s.

Not just the image but the reality of social responsibility is going to be demanded by customers, by the government, by the bright young employees a company must attract and keep to remain vital.

Because we believe that there are businessmen and investors who care about these issues, we are inviting them to get together with the leaders of the corporate responsibility movement, not to shout at each other, but to learn in vigorous civil discussion what is on the other fellow's mind.

Panels will include leading corporate critics, government officials from the agencies and the Hill, and corporate executives who have already been challenged by the movement and who can tell you the lessons they have learned.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND THIS CONFERENCE

Top corporate officials: Because your standing with the public today can dramatically affect the value of your stock, your ability to attract customers, and the degree of regulation under which you labor.

Corporate public relations officials: Because your personal future depends on your ability to interpret public attitudes to your top officers, and advise them on how to respond.

Foundation, university, and religious officials: Because your organizations care about the social result of their investment decisions.

Institutional portfolio managers: Because you may lose shareholders, donations, or trust customers if you cannot defend your investment policies and the way you vote your stock in light of the public interest.

Wall Street research leaders: Because the social responsibility of a company has now been added to your checklist of things you must know about a corporation in order to know how the market should—and will—evaluate its stock.

Advertising executives: Because your clients will be demanding advertising that is sensitive to the movement for corporate responsibility.

A PARTIAL LIST OF SPEAKERS

Clifford L. Alexander Jr. is the former chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission which has a lot to say on hiring practices of major corporations.

Joseph A. Califano Jr. is the former White House assistant who acted as the Coca-Cola/Minute Maid counsel in the recent migrant worker dispute.

Sarah Carey, assistant director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, will explore the criminal sanctions against corporations and their officers who violate present and pending legislation.

Robert B. Choate is the former assistant to the director of the White House Conference on Food, Nutrition & Health who appalled the nation—and changed its eating habits—when he told how low common cereals are in nutritional content.

Aileen Adams Cowan authored the Nader TV report on false and misleading advertising.

Philip Elman is, as a for-

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mer Commissioner of the Federal Trade Commission, in a perfect position to tell what consumers and corporations can expect out of the federal government.

John C. Esposito wrote *Vanishing Air*, the Nader-team book that explored the damaging effects of air pollution by corporations.

A. Ernest Fitzgerald the Air Force's contract enforcement officer who first revealed the $2 billion cost overrun on Lockheed's C-5A, will analyze defense contractors' responsibilities to the public and the extent to which their fulfillment is likely to be demanded by the government.

Nicholas Johnson has made himself famous as the member of the Federal Communications Commission who can't be kept quiet on the ominous power—and how it is used—of TV broadcasters.

Nicholas Katzenbach, former Attorney General and Under Secretary of State, is now Vice President and General Counsel of IBM.

Roger G. Kennedy is Vice President/Finance of the Ford Foundation.

Dan W. Lufkin is a partner of the Wall Street firm of Donaldson, Lufkin & Jenrette and has long been a spokesman on the subject of corporate responsibility and how investors should influence the corporations.

Philip W. Moore is executive director of the Project on Corporate Responsibility that has caused General Motors to hire a special man to handle its public-responsibility image, and to put a distinguished black member of the public on its board.

Richard L. Ottinger, former Congressman from New York, is an organizer of Grassroots Action, Inc., formed to make corporations more responsible to the communities in which they're located.

Robert Pitofsky an anti-trust lawyer on leave from New York University, heads the enforcement arm of the chief agency charged with consumer protection, the FTC.

Robert S. Potter, a Wall Street attorney and chairman of the newly-created Committee on Social Criteria for Investments of the Episcopal Church.

E. Hayes Redmon is the executive assistant Dr. Edwin Land used to represent Polaroid-Land Company in its recent struggles over Polaroid's future in South Africa.

John D. Rockefeller IV is the Secretary of State of West Virginia who is leading the fight against the ravages of strip mining in that state and who was also a leading spokesman for Campaign GM.

Congressman Benjamin S. Rosenthal is the author of the 1970 consumer protection agency bill.

Alice R. Tepper heads the Council on Economic Priorities which has received nationwide TV and magazine coverage for its authoritative report on pollution by the paper industry—and has forced several companies to speed their pollution control efforts as a result.

James S. Turner is author of the Nader report *The Chemical Feast* which revealed the extent to which meaningless and sometimes poisonous additives are corrupting our food.

Caspar W. Weinberger, President Nixon's first chairman of the FTC, is now number two man in the President's powerful Office of Management and Budget, which determines spending—and thus policy priorities—for the entire government.

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Sex, Work, and Motivation in Castro's Cuba

by Barry Reckord

To the outside world, Cuba was first a philosopher's revolution, and commentators were too absorbed in the speculation about Castro's conversion to Marxism to see anything else. Lately, it has become a statistician's revolution, and on these terms, a great success. Although the country didn't reach the goal of a 10-million-ton sugar cane harvest last year, it has made fantastic gains in education, medical care, based on aid yardsticks, Cuba is the most effective development model in the hemisphere.

But the Cubans themselves have somehow gotten lost in the philosophy and the numbers, in the meaning of all they are supposed to represent. Barry Reckord, a Jamaican playwrite, spent several months traveling in Cuba during 1969, talking to people–the inspired, the disgruntled, the indifferent. He finds the country optimistic, fairly stable, and struggling with low rice production, need for machinery, Castro's desire to remain independent from foreign coercion while still having to accept Soviet aid, and his knowledge that bureaucracy could be the downfall of the revolution.

Reckord brings back conflicting conversations that orbit around the question of how a nation can inspire its people without resorting to the individual profit motive or to the force of the state. Cuba, he says, is attempting an appeal to conscience and voluntarism, and the results may make Cuba a lesson not only for South America but for the United States as well.

This article was adapted from Does Fidel Eat More Than Your Father?, *to be published this month by Praeger.* *©1971 by Barry Reckord.*

The Absentee Worker

The absentee and his wife were watching a Cuban television drama, an incredible business of slapped faces that snapped back defiant, chained hands, and blazing revolutionary eyes. Her head was in his comfortable lap. They offered to turn down the telly, but I said I'd come again. The comfort seemed unbreakable.

I managed to see him two weeks later. He was still happily loafing, taking two or three days off a week. Since there's little to buy, many Cubans can live on half a month's wages, so absenteeism is a serious problem in Cuba and the subject of many a government campaign. A report published in *Granma*, the official newspaper, for example, in October, 1969, made it clear that on one farm in Camaguey attendance was as low as 45 per cent, and in most places no higher than 65 per cent.

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Taking care of the workers still means small things like making refreshments available to them. Large scale improvements like better housing will have to wait many years. But the government is avoiding repression. Cuban production could probably be doubled if there were no absenteeism; and there is a desperate shortage of labor, yet Castro avoids even standard coercive devices like raising prices or lowering wages so that absentees would be forced to work harder to live. The revolutionary method is appeal to conscience. This most central problem of socialism, the problem of incentive, is to be solved neither by Stalinist repression nor neo-capitalist devices, but by conscience. I wonder how this worked in practice, what actually happened in the factories.

"I don't get paid for the days I don't work," the absentee said, "so no problem."

"What do they actually say to you at work?"

"They are very joky," he said, sarcastically. "They say 'Well, Comrade, in Havana you think about nothing but food. And where to find a little woman. You think of nothing else. Sex and rice. So agricultural work will be good. The clean open air. The country. You will fall in love with the country. Very exciting."

"What do you say?"

"Man, the last thing I want is to

Lee Lockwood–Black Star

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leave Havana. You know there's this woman I see. She's a staunch Party member on her block, but left to her I'd never get to work. She wants me every day, every day, but impossible. And night absolutely impossible—her husband, my wife. So every other day we ride 'em cowboy. All day."

"In her house?"

"No. She says her bed is for husband. If I want to be husband, OK, if not *posada*." (*Posadas* are houses which let rooms to couples who want a bed. They often queue up.)

"So we go to *posada*, and to one or two places we know, like one dark underground car park. Oh, if I go to agriculture she'll find another bastard like me and there would I be in agriculture ploughing for Castro. How could I stand it? I'll go to jail. I need my wife, I need this other bitch. The one thing I don't need is the job."

"What's the job?"

"Nothing. Sticking labels on bottles. Women can do that."

"Why don't you study if you don't like sticking labels?"

"I don't like studying. When the revolution came I was 16. Out of school. No steady job, left school at 12. At nine really. Then revolution and they send me to school. I nearly finished junior high school. But I'm no good for studying. I married. Got a job. My wife too. And my mother. Everybody. We work, go to pictures. Eat at restaurants. We live like kings. I lose pay for not going to work but I earn all I need to live. So why work every day?"

The Medical Student

The medical student who was with us, very drunk, started shouting to me over the music that he'd just had a horrid fantasy of a Cuba filled with black marketeers, and absentees shot or sent to jail.

"And think, it isn't true! Cuba, by God, has made it!" he shouted to the bar full of Russian tourists. "This dago country has made it! It isn't, as the Yankee Schlesinger said, a mendicant communist satellite in the Caribbean." He turned and said softly to me: "You don't have to hold your breath and hope it isn't. It *isn't*. Cuba is about to produce 10 million measurable tons of sugar. Or nine million. What does it matter? And I," he said sadly, looking at his hands, "cut some of it."

That was one of my memorable moments in Cuba. I had this sudden feeling of Cubans with held breath, silently watching their own revolution. The classic argument against socialism, of course, is that men work to buy things and to get ahead and that if you take those reasons away the only alternative is terror. That is why to die-hard capitalists Cuba must not succeed, or must be written off as too small to count, or as a special case. But Cuba so far *has* succeeded in its goal of bread without terror. The cane for the 1970 harvest was cut by 350,000 volunteers, some driven by conscience, some by herd-feeling, some by the camaraderie of the cane fields, some by the excitement of the occasion; none by hunger or terror. (There were, *Granma* reports, far more volunteers than could be used.) Unfortunately many of these willing hearts have erratic work habits, and in November, 1969, Fidel, giving them instructions for the harvest, appealed for discipline.

The Ex-Manager

"Of course Fidel can talk," said an ex-manager I talked to, out in the country. "He's like a school teacher with a cane. He doesn't have to use it. He has it, and he tells you, 'Oh, it's easy, just coax them; look how quiet they are. How fucking still. It's beautiful. *You* get the same results.'

"Well, I didn't get the same results. In my factory we had a high loss in man days—sometimes half the place absent, sometimes 30 per cent, that is

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three out of 10. Of course, then the party rolls in with this guy in a bitch of a car, chauffeur, everything, even cigars to hand round, all the way from Havana, chats them up—these peasants, they gawk and there are no absences for a few days and he says, 'See, just coax them. No brute force. You don't have to transfer them. It's not their fault. It's yours.' You hear that? *My* fault. Just a little firm coaxing. And when he phones a month later to check, two out of the usual three have gone absent again but he says, 'See, it's a great success. Thirty per cent success, with one visit. If I could be there all the time—100 per cent.' The man from Havana leaves me in the shit with my people. They glance at me as if to say, '*He* could get us back, but *you* couldn't.' So I packed the whole fucking thing in. My God, oh my God. They keep on saying good management would cut down absenteeism, good managers like Fidel, yes, but do I have what he has, the cars, the cigars, all that overhead? The fucking army took over my factory.

"How I got the job? Oh, I was the buddy of a buddy—how do people get jobs in Cuba? A friend says to Fidel 'I know a man. . . .' Fidel says, 'I'm tired of men, I want a genius. Preferably an Oriente peasant.' Like this bastard who's taken my job. This melon. No background. This black arse-hole known only to himself. And he's in charge. And then he'll get fired like me and want to shoot Fidel. That's Cuba. Land of mystery and women."

The New Manager

I talked to the new soldier/manager, a typically unsophisticated Cuban, about 35, black, a growing reputation in the province, one or two comforting cliches at his fingertips, not much more.

"What is your rank?"

"Does that matter? No, no, that doesn't really matter."

"Rank counts in the Cuban army."

"Yes, we inherited a lot of things from the Russians, but rank only makes sense in a class society. It can't last long in Cuba," he said, with some show of daring.

"Why is the army taking over farms and factories?"

"I suppose really because every revolutionary is a soldier."

"But why take over the farms and factories? The army smells of force and cows don't take orders."

"Nor even give them, which is a pity because our cowhands would then know what to do. No, the position is that the army has such complicated weapons nowadays that our best soldiers have to be technicians. So they can double up very usefully in the farms and factories where we need technology. The man who drives a tank can drive a tractor. It's got nothing to do with giving or taking orders. The army at present has the most knowledgeable people around. Also some of the most revolutionary. As I said, the dream of every Cuban boy is to be Che. Not dream, determination. Dreams won't create the new man in America."

"Who is he? Describe him."

"New men with socialist natures."

"You feel you're a new man?"

"Well in the sense that I act on my ideals. That is the way I was brought up. I can fight. I can produce. My education was that of the new man. I am willing to go anywhere in Cuba to increase production and I don't ask how much they'll pay me."

"You don't feel jealousy is a vice?"

"It's a bible vice. People are going to be jealous, but so what? You can't restrain people's thoughts or feeling but only their actions. A good man does a good job, and doesn't bother with intrigue."

"My impression is that it isn't just naked absenteeism that's the problem, but also loafing."

"They're both problems. But you're right about the four-hour day. You only need one loafer on a team to

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destroy its rhythm and pace. He goes to the toilet, he decides to have a smoke, he talks in a way that amuses his mates, or he bores them, but what can they do? Soon they're all working at his pace, telling their own stories. Soon the next bench are all doing the same thing. This sort of thing spreads like germs because, you see, people are only waiting for a chance to work at their natural pace which is quite slow. Much too leisurely, with a lot of talking. How do you ask a man to shovel sand into a hole eight hours a day. Five and a half days a week. Plus unpaid overtime which is about two hours a day. Shoveling sand into a hole. Who wants that?"

"Do you fulfill your goals?"

"Yes."

"Always?"

"Yes. In fact we surpass them these days."

"Is production in Cuba rising?"

"Investments are beginning to pay off. So far production has been up and down or lagged badly. Our lean years."

I said, "The general pattern since the revolution has been falling production and broken promises, yet the masses still avidly listen to Fidel, the young support him, and there have been no defections from among the top leaders of the revolution. Why is that?"

"Because the revolution has been so logical. Get rid of the old order, push, push, push the people's education, guard their health, look around for the right things to grow and manufacture, solve nothing by force and think big. Underdeveloped people think in tens and twenties. Fidel has taught us to think in millions. On this program the grass must grow. If not today, tomorrow. The people themselves are planting it. They are not waiting for manna from any government. Increasingly it's like that in Cuba. Democratic. The work and will of the people. Here we plant manna."

I said, "Has falling production been due to ignorance, or collectivization and lack of individual incentive?"

"Collectivization and incentive has less to do with it than, say, the weather. Look at the figures. Take sugar. One year up, one year down—1965 six million, 1966 four-and-a-half million, 1967 six million, 1968 five million. The collectivization and incentives haven't changed but the figures change because of drought and problems of organization.

"In my experience organization is the best incentive. An ounce of organization is worth a ton of punishment. You see, I've organized this place so that the machinery doesn't break down and the supplies come in regularly so there are no hold-ups. That is something relatively new in Cuban factories, where things are always going wrong and workers enjoy the chance to hang about. For many years the revolution was one big breakdown in most of these places because we couldn't get spare parts—the blockade, the long journey from the Soviet Union, the lack of standardization—so we idled and joked half the week and the other half put in tremendous stints. It was dramatic, but not specially productive. The average was low, and some of the work was shoddy—the sort that comes from over-work. When there is widespread ignorance and things are disorganized people naturally can't function and mistakes have a chain reaction. Some of the workers look around for somebody to blame. Some drink rum and wait for the next disaster. And *Time* magazine, of course, called it all sabotage—which was at least flattering.

"You see, any agricultural project is an accumulation of scores of mechanized, skilled operations and we are still a highly unskilled people. We are still superstitious people who believe in magic and mystery and can never quite believe that one and one make two, every day, all the time. We wouldn't do the same thing two days running because we'd never believed it

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would work two days running—whatever power controlled things wasn't scientific. So all sorts of funny things happened.

"And none of this is due to a lack of material incentive. With their free press and all, Yankees still seem very ignorant about basic things like politics. They can't last, can they? No, material incentives aren't important. The kind of thing that would have ruined Cuba would have been big wrong decisions like going ahead with industry 10 years ago. Instead, Fidel switched back to sugar, where we at any rate had some know-how, and we earned the money and time to train engineers, who can now make a success of industry. But you've got to be organized. The 10 million tons represents the kind of organizational effort that any advanced country would be proud of. It makes us agriculturally a developed country."

Fidel and the Bureaucrats

The fear that people won't work or study unless individually rewarded is regarded as disproved by the success of the revolution. Cubans constantly underlined to me the fact that the day of individual research is dead, and pointed to the inventiveness shown by revolutionary teams—for example in the invention of spare parts that can't be obtained because of the U.S. blockade. This Cuban drama of invention, of collectively finding ways around problems, now centers around the need to invent a machine to cut cane.

Attempts to build a cane harvester in other parts of the world have been unsucessful, and the job was attempted by Soviet engineers who also failed. The Cubans, however, succeeded in building the new Henderson machine, which would replace the more complicated Libertadora.

After successful trials the government decided to try to build 1,000 Hendersons per year in 1971. The Hendersons are basically bulldozers, which are always useful. But a private capitalist or bureaucrat would probably find this kind of expenditure unforgivable. Bureaucratic decisions made in an office are often going to be different from those made by workers in the field. Those who don't cut cane want to save money. Those who cut cane want to save labor. There is frequently a difference of interest between worker and bureaucrat, and in fact some Cubans already feel that Cuban equality is being threatened by the rise of a new class of bureaucrats.

There was a time when people in the U.S. feared that they might be outproduced by what they thought was a planned, regimented, and efficient Soviet production machine, but that was before they knew about the inefficiency of bureaucracy. Bureaucrats have neither capitalist incentives nor socialist conscience. Castro defines them as chronic white-collar types who are averse to manual work, never leave their offices, and are too remote from problems generally to make sound plans. Bureaucracy, he has said, is almost as dangerous an enemy as imperialism. His cure is to have worker-intellectuals, who know the job from the ground up, and the Cuban revolution has taken massively to working and studying. Fidel himself has become knowledgeable in agriculture and animal genetics. His plan is eventually to have everybody working four hours and studying four hours in universities built around farms and factories.

At present Cuban workers are very much at the mercy of planners who dirty their hands cutting cane two weeks a year and on the occasional Sunday—also very much at the mercy of Fidel's benevolence. Fidel appears to be aware of the situation and is belting ahead with educational plans aimed at ending the difference between "monopolists of knowledge" and "monopolists of ignorance." In the Soviet Union students *do* practical

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work. In Cuba workers and students will increasingly *be* the same people.

In the meantime, till this day arrives, Cuban leaders are supposed not to be petit-bourgeois, collar-and-tie brethren, but revolutionaries who "go into the factories, into production units, rooting out everything that hinders progress, solving problems" (Fidel).

Anybody can foresee the results of this breezy inspirational work-style on the tidy bureaucratic mind. Fidel sweeps in, roots out something, plans get changed every month, production sometimes falls, people are irritated, and pride is hurt. Among Cuban planners today, swallowing pride is the cardinal revolutionary virtue, and not an easy one in a people given to *machismo*. A few resign, leave the country, work with cool spite for the CIA, commit suicide. (When one Minister of Labor cut his throat, his best friend said to a friend of mine, "How could he do that to Fidel?")

In a speech congratulating steel workers who had built 800 harrows in 23 days, Castro showed the happier results of this work-style.

> The work began January 25, not just on heavy 17,000-pound harrows but also on 10,000-pound harrows. And in record time, just 23 days, the 800 harrows needed were produced. . . .
>
> This is a good example of what can be done when revolutionary methods of leadership are employed, of what can be accomplished when bureaucratic red tape is avoided. . . .
>
> What aroused the enthusiasm of the workers in the various enterprises that participated in this plan? . . . Was it an organizational diagram? It wasn't the paperwork; it was the spirit, the antithesis of paperwork, offices, and even organizational diagrams . . . . It is not hard to make organograms. A line here, three there, squares, and more squares. It develops in someone's mind, as an idea, a sheer abstraction. Someone feels that life must adjust to this diagram. And instead of trying to adjust the forms of organization to life, he tries to adjust life to those abstract forms of organization. And that's how everything gets tangled up.
>
> I don't know whether I am an efficient or a deficient minister, but I do recall something of which I will always be proud. The first thing I did was to completely close down an office called the Office of the Prime Minister, when I found out it answered no need whatsoever. . . . If we had followed the bureaucratic concept, we could have asked for the largest building and drawn up the largest of all organization charts. . . .
>
> Everyone knows, for example, all that education has done throughout the country, and how it was done. And to spark off all this activity, they did not require a building, nor a huge organization chart, nor a 10 or 12-million peso budget. And there you have the importance of concepts. Adhering to the old concept would have cost the republic 80 million pesos in eight years of revolution . . . . The capitalists had a lot of bureaucracy, and we have not eradicated it; we have, on occasion, increased it. There are factories, production units, where a capitalist owner employed three or four office employees, and we have 25 or 40. Why? We have to go to the root of the problem. (*Granma*, February 26, 1967)

The root of the problem is bureaucracy, and the Cuban cure for bureaucracy is to create the worker-intellectual. The worker-student program will no doubt be facilitated by automation which cuts down the hours and harshness of labor so workers won't be too tired to study.

But is Fidel going to have to push the program through almost single-handed? He set up a committee to cut down bureaucracy and soon had to denounce it for becoming bureaucratic. Cuba is full of die-hard bureaucratic elitists who believe in the division of labor. They continue, for example, to treasure chauffeurs.

A fear of bureaucracy partly explains Fidel's ambivalent attitude to the communist party, which he often regards as the great red hope of Cuban democracy, but occasionally cold-shoulders.

The plan of the party is that workers on factory and farm will elect representatives who, in turn, elect delegates to regional, provincial, and finally national councils, culminating in the Central Committee of the

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Communist Party and the politburo. At present party members are nominated by workers and finally selected by the party.

It may be that an elected party will at some stage emerge in Cuba, just as the constitution now being worked on by Blas Roca, an old communist, may one day materialize; but the fact is that Castro not only wants to retain power in his own hands, but has a rooted distrust of saddling the Cuban people with a Soviet-style party bureaucracy—representatives entrenched in privileges, offering more and more "guidance" while doing less and less work, setting a bad example to workers, a host of multiplying middlemen between the plan and its performance, so that work is seen once again as a curse, needing special rewards and incentives to make it bearable.

A Woman on Capitalism

"In capitalism," a woman said, "you expect men to be devils. They sometimes aren't, but you expect devilry and self-interest, and that is a sensible basis on which to live. You expect ambition, privilege, inequality, so you legislate on a *laissez-faire* basis, only making sure that extremes don't get too impossible. In communism ordinary men are supposed to be angels, so you end up with a lot of cynicism and pretense, with a lot of nasty flies winging about like angels, blind to their privileges. Communists try to do too much. They don't understand people. Don't you know that the more equal men get, the more watchful they are about any trace of privileges? And of course there is bound to be privilege, so the greater the equality the more the misery. Life is like that. No movements can contain it. It overruns all movements."

"It is intolerable to have one power, because human beings have a perverse desire to say no, even to righteousness.

Socialism or Sociolism

In Cuba the word *socio* means buddy and there is a well-known joke that sociolism reigns, not socialism. I asked a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party where the manager of the factory I'd visited got his house. He said probably the same place he got his fence. It wasn't important, since the vast majority of houses were being built for workers on the state farms who had nowhere decent to live.

"For us equality is good economics as much as idealism. The minute we develop an elite in Cuba, voluntary labor is dead; and this country runs on voluntary labor. Our greatest effort, the 10 million tons, is based on voluntary labor and the sharing of dirty work. Clearly no man is going to cut cane if the Major is at the beach with his wife and a basketful of fried

"**The Last Thing** I would want to do before this committee—or any responsible committee—is vouch for what appears in **The Texas Observer.**"—John Connally at Senate Finance Committee hearing on 2-2-71.

"I think **The Observer** ranks with **The Progressive** as one of the two most useful papers in the United States. It manages to make the most obscure (and often deservedly so) Texas politicians and their capers interesting even in this remote section of the effete East."—John Kenneth Galbraith, 9-16-70.

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chicken."

"But what about cutting cane side by side with some major who arrives in a car and goes home to fried chicken?"

"The people don't worry about that much because they know on the whole the leaders have more responsibilities, and are working like hell for general abundance. And, better yet, are achieving it. There is a broad equality which justifies voluntary labor; and voluntary labor is the central tool of this revolution. It was Che's creation, Che's weapon. It was tried, as you know, in Russia, but its hour hadn't come and it gave way to individual incentives. But Che pushed it through in Cuba. Che believed that even if most people are selfish and suffering from 'human nature,' some have idealism which should be harnessed. For example, you have a factory full of selfish people who won't even come to work, so instead of threatening them with unemployment you call on the few idealists in the factory to do the work, express their idealism in deed, work 10, 12, 18 hours a day till the plan is fulfilled. What the loafers drop, the revolutionaries pick up."

"Any future Latin American revolution," he said, "must use voluntary labor as a central revolutionary principle. In the early years how would we have solved the unemployment problem without voluntary labor? You know what happened; at the revolution's triumph there was vast unemployment. Well, we sent some to school and used the rest building an infrastructure, paid for with the assets we seized from the Yanks, plus red gold later on. Also we padded the existing workplaces a bit. So what happened? With full employment all the barefoot people wanted easier jobs. The sugarworkers got out of the sun and into air-conditioned offices making coffee for bureaucrats. Nearly every Cuban who could, found himself a sinecure. Without voluntary labor to cut the cane we would have had to whip all those people back into the canefields. Instead the army of conscience swarmed over the fields, cutting cane. They ruined some of it but there was a net gain, because money gradually became a secondary matter in Cuba. It was no longer a silver scale with which men carefully weighed out their labor to the nearest ounce. Wage slavery was abolished, *chico*. That bullshit is over. You know, voluntary labor nearly killed me. I couldn't face manual work. Say manual labor to a Cuban and he says yes, yes, all right, but really his back isn't shaped that way. Now every Cuban child picks coffee at 10 and cuts or weeds cane at 15 as part of education. . . . Labor is fashionable."

The first stage in the development of voluntary labor in Cuba was to deal with the aversion of bourgeois culture to manual work so it could more easily be shared. The second stage, now under way, is to deepen people's understanding of shared labor as the key to a classless, educated society.

The great symbol of this second stage was the 1970 goal of a 10-million-ton sugar harvest, described by Herbert Matthews of *The New York Times* as "certainly beyond the range of probability." The work was to be done largely by volunteers; they were to cut as much as they could, and among them there was no question of piecework. The incentive was conscience, not money.

The 10-million-ton failure was an emotional blow for Fidel, with incalculable political consequences, since it deepens his debt to the Russians. Nonetheless there was a record harvest (8.4 million tons) which in an earlier speech Castro described as a triumph for the people in the canefields. He attributed their falling short of 10 million tons to the inefficient management of sugar mills, and mentioned the late arrival of vital machinery, some of it from strife-torn Czechoslovakia. He assumed general responsibility for the failure and offered to resign, but most Cubans are so keenly

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aware of his personal anguish that his standing among them is unshaken. On the other hand there will be disenchantment among the uncommitted, and bitter division in the society. Under these circumstances the door seems to me to be wide open for repressive bureaucratic measure, but what Fidel actually proposed was more say for the workers. Collective leadership would be organized in factories, with workers having as much say as the administrator and the representatives of the Communist Party—the Chinese road, in fact, on Russian money, a tightrope walk that it will be difficult for Fidel to survive. But *if* over the next few years Cuba can maintain a yearly sugar harvest of eight-and-a-half million tons, worth nearly one billion dollars, this should go far to ensure economic stability.

Perhaps the purely economic effects of the harvest have received too much attention both in Cuba and abroad. Equally important is the fact that the harvest was produced, not by hungry and ignorant wage-slaves working 16 hours a day for four months and unemployed the rest of the year, but by volunteers who were more politically and culturally aware. This moral currency has, of course, little value, and Castro's survival will depend on hard cash.

I decided to try voluntary labor. The hotel staff were going out on Sundays to work in coffee, so I got up early, joined the people drinking coffee and eating a biscuit in the throaty five o'clock dark, caught a truck that came two hours late. I grumbled, but they all said, "Progress, it used to be four hours late," and we drove happily through the Cuban morning. Then I started digging holes in the ground, to fill cellophane bags with earth for the coffee plants, and learned the art of packing them evenly in rows.

I soon realized that I preferred writing plays, but people around me seemed quite relaxed, and I persisted until my back ached. That I could bear, but not the boredom. It all seemed like playing in dirt. Dig and fill, dig and fill; I longed for, watched for, the breaks for cold sugar and water, then lunch. A man shouted gaily, "What, no music, no baseball?" Everybody laughed except me. They turned on the damned sound system. I preached to myself the gospel of work—as revolutionary for the bourgeois, I said, as Christianity for the Graeco-Roman aristocracy. My dry, dirty paws couldn't grip the chalky cellophane bags; my teeth were on edge, my nerves cringed. I wanted a bath. I thought of delights in far-away places, but the sun was insistent. I said to my happy neighbor, "People don't write books in order to read them, why should I have to plant coffee to drink it?" I walked 300 yards for a large shovel, and wondered what the hell it must be like cutting cane.

"The new man," said an aging doctor, "is a man who works in agriculture, God bless him, then goes and performs an operation. Of course you might say it won't be a good operation, insufficient practice, too much time in the cane, but all the good surgeons I know used to spend hours on the golf course, so why not the canefields or driving a bus? There is your classless society. Your equality. No laboring class. Now you will still have brilliant doctors and bad doctors, and there's choking inequality, but choking I fear ends in heaven and we are in Cuba. And of course if people study medicine for love and aptitude, not money and kudos, there'll be fewer charlatans. There will still be unequal talents, you know, and envy. I like to be in charge of something, some program, but I'm quite satisfied that by and large, by and large, mark you, I approve of the medical program in Cuba, by and large. Nobody quite does anything your way, but then neither do you do things their way, so just let the thing be done, so long as it's very broadly correct, it doesn't matter by who."■

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POLITICAL BOOK NOTES

This section lists public affairs books scheduled for publication this month. Publishers who want descriptions of their books included should notify us two months in advance and provide a brief (50 words or less) objective summary of the contents.

The Advance Man. Jerry Bruno and Jeff Greenfield. Morrow, $5.95.

Agnew the Unexamined Man: A Political Profile. Robert Marsh. M. Evans, $5.95.

America the Dutiful. Philip W. Quigg. Simon & Schuster, $6.95.
The former managing editor of *Foreign Affairs* provides an appraisal of American foreign policy since World War II.

America on Trial: The War for Vietnam. General Thomas A. Lane. Arlington, $7.95.

America's Other Youth. Edited by David Gottlieb and Anne Heinsohn. Prentice-Hall, $6.95.

Anti-California: Report from Our First Parafascist State. Kenneth Lamott. Little, Brown, $6.95.

The Bitter Taste of Glory. Jack Valenti. World, $5.95.

Blacks, Medical Schools, and Society. James L. Curtis, M.D. U. of Michigan, $6.95.
A history of the black physician in America—from colonial times to the present—as well as an analysis of contemporary trends in black medical education.

The C-5A Scandal. Berkeley Rice. Houghton Mifflin, $5.95.
An expose of the military-industrial complex's functioning in dealing with the C-5A, indicting the Pentagon, Congress and Lockheed, the C-5A's builder and the country's largest defense contractor.

The College War: A Sympathetic Look at the University in Agony. John Searle. World, $6.95.

Confessions of a White Racist. Larry L. King. Viking, $6.95.

The Cruel Choice: A New Concept in the Theory of Development. Denis Goulet. Atheneum, $12.95.
A philosophical challenge to prevailing conceptions of "development." Focuses on the moral dilemmas posed by development, aid, technological transfers, and world institutions which can either domesticate the Third World or create a new future for its people.

David. William Hoffman. Lyle Stuart, $5.95.

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Does Fidel Eat More Than Your Father? Barry Reckord. Praeger, $6.95.

Eye on the World. Walter Cronkite. Cowles, $8.95; paper, $4.95.

The Foreign Affairs Fudge Factory. John Franklin Campbell. Basic Books, $6.95.

Forty Days with the Enemy. Richard Dudman. Liveright, $5.95.

High School. Edited by Ronald Gross and Paul Osterman. Simon & Schuster, $7.95.
An anthology identifying what high school is like now, how it got that way, why it fails the adolescent, and suggesting possible answers. Contributors include Edgar Friedenberg, Theodore Roszak, Jules Henry, Jonathan Kozol, and Herbert Kohl, as well as students, teachers, and administrators.

Imperialists and Other Heroes. Ronald Steel. Random House, $8.95.

Income Distribution: Facts, Theories, Policies. Jan Pen. Praeger, $12.00.
Brings together material on wages, profits, and theories on personal distribution. Interweaves sociological and political themes with economic analysis. How heavily are the dice loaded against women? What is the influence of education and the role of city planning? How equal can we make income distribution without harming economic growth and democracy?

Leaders in American Education. Edited by Robert J. Havighurst. U. of Chicago, $6.50.
In the Seventieth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, 11 educators, including Ruth M. Strang, James Conant, and John S. Brubacher, speak out about their lives, the problems characteristic of the institutions in which they work, and the solutions they found.

The New Exiles: American War Resisters in Canada. Roger Neville Williams. Liveright, $7.95.

The New Left and the Jews. Edited by Mordecai Chertoff. Pitman, $6.50.

A New Radical's Guide to Economic Reality. Angus Black. Holt, Rinehart & Winston, $4.95; paper, $2.45.

Obiter Dicta: Opinions, Judicious and Otherwise, on Lawyers and the Law. Joseph W. Bishop, Jr. Atheneum, $8.95.

Playing Soldier: A Diatribe. Frank Getlein. Holt, Rinehart & Winston, $5.95.
A satiric report on the American military society since World War II.

The Pursuit of Wilderness. Paul Brooks. Houghton Mifflin, $6.95.

Race and Politics in New York City: Five Studies in Policy-Making. Edited by Jewell Bellush and Stephen David. Praeger, $7.50; paper, $2.95.

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Focuses on New York City's black communities' demands on education, housing, welfare, health, and police services. Concentrates on policies of the Lindsay Administration but also reviews the Wagner period.

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A Rap on Race. Margaret Mead and James Baldwin. Lippincott, $6.95.

Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals. Saul Alinsky. Random House, $6.95.

Setting National Priorities: The 1972 Budget. Charles L. Schultze, Edward R. Fried, Alice M. Rivlin, Nancy H. Teeters. Brookings, $8.95; paper, $2.95.
An examination of President Nixon's budget with special attention to controversial issues that could profoundly affect the pattern of domestic spending.

Soldiers Without Enemies: Preparing the United Nations for Peacekeeping. Larry L. Fabian. Brookings, $7.50; paper, $3.50.
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The Space Dealers. Edwin P. Hoyt. John Day, $6.95.
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A Special Rage. Gilbert Moore. Harper & Row, $6.95.

Stokely Speaks: From Civil Rights to Black Power and Pan-Africanism. Stokely Carmichael. Random House, $6.95; paper, $1.95.

The Sunshine Soldiers. Peter Tauber. Simon & Schuster, $6.95.
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Time's Children: Impressions of Youth. Thomas J. Cottle. Little, Brown, $7.95.

Yazoo. Willie Morris. Harper & Row, $5.95.

Youth Up in Arms. George Paloczi-Horvath. McKay, $6.95.
A social anthropologist retraces events of the student revolutions around the globe—in Budapest, Berkeley, Berlin, and Paris.

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The Johns Hopkins Press
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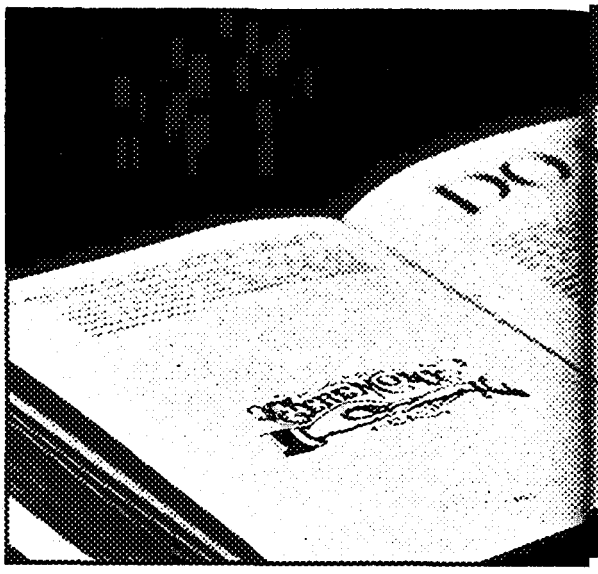
Why Can't Johnny Be Relevant?

a review by Jamie Rosenthal

The Soft Revolution by Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner
Delacorte Press, New York. $4.95

For a while after college one of my best friends taught junior and senior English at a tradition-bound girls' school in northern Virginia. She organized poetry readings on her own time, wore her skirts too short for the headmistress' taste, sweated through grass-smoking expulsions with three or four of her kids, and griped along with them about various stringent rules and restrictions. The courses she was hired to give were standard-brand high school lit—long on Shakespeare, Dickens, Melville, and the Romantic Poets, short on anything written after 1950. Specific course content was determined each summer by the head of the English department, without any kind of formal student consultation; there were number grades and letter grades, complete with pluses, minuses, and much accompanying wailing and gnashing of teeth; and the Bob Dylan lyrics Alex mimeographed for the kids to study in class were in addition to, not part of, their regular work.

She stuck it out for two years. Then, last fall, when she married and moved to New York, she took a job at a progressive co-ed high school, also private, where nobody cared what she wore, where regulations were minimal, where the "drug problem"—at least as far as soft drugs were concerned—was defined as pushing, not using, and where the course for which she was responsible was a full-credit, pass-fail



elective in contemporary science fiction, suggested and partially designed by the students themselves.

Three weeks ago, she quit.

"I couldn't stand it anymore," she now says disconsolately. "The kids were bored out of their skulls—they only had to come to class twice a week, and they just didn't have the discipline to do the reading on their own. I couldn't motivate them to, anyway. Maybe a better teacher..." But she is, in fact, a remarkable teacher; good enough so that even the most deadpan of the future *Town and Country* page-gracers had gotten excited about their term papers, calling up for extra reading suggestions; good enough so that in two years almost no week passed without

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someone's telling her, "Ohh—I never saw it that way before."

Within the frame of reference set up by *The Soft Revolution*, this sequence of events is virtually unthinkable, and it's one of the reasons the book is so exasperating to read. For although it focuses primarily on tactics—Postman and Weingartner have put together a collection of "advice, maxims, homilies, metaphors, models, case studies, rules, commentaries, jokes, sayings, and a variety of other things you may be able to use right now or in the years to come to hasten educational change"—*The Soft Revolution* contains a number of stated and implicit assumptions that have nothing to do with tactics per se. And one of them is that High School Heaven consists of precisely the combination of hang-loose atmosphere, absence of grades, and student-conceived, "with-it" courses (sometimes they use the quotes, sometimes they don't; it's hard to decide which is more offensive) that eventually proved so discouraging to at least one unusually sensitive, dedicated and tenacious young teacher—discouraging to her because it left her students so dissatisfied.

The "you" for whom the authors (professors of education, considered leaders of the academic educational radicals) have prepared the smorgasbord is a student somewhere between 15 and 25, one of the millions whose attitude towards the existing educational system in the United States falls "somewhere between accommodation and hysteria." The book is addressed, in other words, to the disaffected who don't yet believe that destruction is a necessary precursor to amelioration. Parents, teachers, school administrators, and "just plain romantics who still believe in the improvability of social institutions" are invited to come along for the ride.

That takes in a lot of us. Unfortunately, the book's tailored, ingratiating, one-of-the-gang tone—conjure up a youth-fellowship coffeehouse supervisor chirping heartily, "Okay, let's rap about that for a while," and there you have it—will probably push down the age range of anybody able to read *The Soft Revolution* without

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wincing: I'm not sure that even a junior high school kid wouldn't bristle. It's not the colloquialness itself which jars—it can be used to powerful effect, as it is, for instance, in *Letter to a Teacher*, a glowing, extraordinary book by a group of Italian schoolboys which covers many of the same subjects this one does. Here, though, it's so contrived that it's condescending, ultimately; demeaning of both subject and audience. Along with the gimmicky format (10 or 15 different type faces, interspersed blank pages, free verse formulations, and stray, fey capitalizations and italics), it is as exasperating as the rigidity of the conventionally unorthodox views on what constitute optimal conditions for education.

What makes all of it exasperating, rather than merely off-putting or silly, is that most of the tactics advanced in the book are good. The generic term the authors employ for them is "judo," an approach they consider more efficient, more humane, and in the long run more effective than confrontation. It involves not so much working within the system, as working *with* it, using it, even turning it to your advantage. In addition, the book contains a slew of provocative, practical suggestions to facilitate learning, a sane, exhaustive section on students' legal rights, and a number of observations which are valuable not only in the context of educational change but in institutional change in general and which deserve thoughtful hearing.

Shakespeare's Bathwater

It is more than a matter of style and dogmatism undercutting substance. The unevenness is substantive as well—and it's in this area that it's most exasperating of all. There is a kind of logical vacuity, a fuzziness of thought, which seems to afflict *The Soft Revolution* whenever it moves away from questions of strategy, small-scale improvements, and socio-political home-truths. Nowhere in the book is this more egregious than in the sample "Open Letter to a Faculty Member from One of His Revolutionary Students (Soft Variety)"—a smarmy, smart-aleck document if there ever was one—which the authors have thoughtfully provided, complete in imitation typescript, for readers to fill in the blanks and use. The letter is designed as a vehicle for some proposals on alternate means of structuring colleges; it includes this typically illuminating passage:

> Well, then, what is it that they, the preservers of culture, have to communicate? What do our professors have to tell us that is decent, and humane, and worth perpetuating? Will they ask us to be proud that there is an American flag stuck on the moon? Will they tell us that the $80-billion-a-year spent on weaponry is for the purpose of making the planet safe for democracy? Will they tell us that communism is bad? That booze is better than pot? That cleanliness and short hair are next to godliness? That we should save our money and work hard? That Shakespeare was a great writer? That marriages are made in heaven? That technology or bureaucracy will save us all? Well, we don't want to hear all that crap. . . .

Unfortunately, this kind of condemnation by association, this readiness to throw out Shakespeare with the bathwater (and artificially muddied bathwater at that: I suspect most professors would rather see the bulk of the $80 billion spent on education, and I doubt that many of them spend too much time prating about heaven-made marriages), lies at the heart of most of *The Soft Revolution*'s recommendations for "profound change."

Thus for schools with insufficient student participation, they propose to do away with faculty altogether (they would be paid, and if the students decided they might know something useful, they could be consulted); for insufficient sense of purpose, they seek to make "Why should I study this subject?" the subject of all courses (a kind of perpetual self-analysis akin to those ghastly discussions between couples who are continually examining "our relationship").

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As a remedy to the coercive present-day college structure, with all its inhibiting regulations, we should rebuild the schools along the lines of public libraries, with "no requirements, no syllabus, no curriculum, no grading system, no Dean's list, no competition, and no tests." Or turn schools into institutes of social action, again without courses, but with "problem areas"—crime, drug abuse, race relations—to be investigated instead: ideally through "community work," with the teacher's role limited to that of coordinator, making arrangements for the students' activities.

For those boring classes in American history and Elizabethan drama, subjects which have been in the catalogs for decades, and which, as we all know, are retained by professors because it is only in subjects like these that they can perpetuate the myth of their superiority, let's substitute classes in "cinematography, ecology, photography, electronics, narcotics, urban affairs, race relations, birth control, mass media and popular culture"; courses in which, the authors maintain, students are the legitimate teachers—as if it were impossible for someone over 30 to know more about any of these fields than an 18-year old (which is not to say that some 18-year-olds don't know more), or as if "teacher," by definition, in fact *meant* someone over 30. And as if these subjects were somehow automatically immune to the "Why-should-I-study-it?" syndrome. All of these proposals, actually, contain kernels of real worth. But even allowing for a large, "shock-em-into-thinking" component, the all-or-nothing quality vitiates their usefulness, and makes it hard for us to take them as seriously as we'd like to.

There's certainly everything to be said for the more flexible, open-classroom arrangement, which institutionalizes and encourages the give-and-take. It's not the only answer, though, and the other alternatives, some of which have to do with the pesky problem of attracting more good teachers into the school system and keeping them there, are left not only unexplored, but unbowed-to (mostly, I suspect, because they lack that nice satisfying THWONK of advocating a structural turn-around.)

Shifting focus for a moment from the book proper to the general fashionable educational outlook that provides its underpinnings—and it *is* fashionable, for all the authors' self-congratulatory air of iconoclasm—there are still a couple of things to say. And harder to say them without hesitancy, because freedom and relevance are such unassailable soul-words that any demurrals are bound to seem insensitive, or at the very least—since most schools do have so far to go in loosening up—impolitic. All the same, there are some discomfiting facets to the whole chic untrammeled, unstructured, "meaningful" approach to learning.

Babylonian Liberation

Educere: to lead out. The encouragement of a kind of imaginative stretching, a series of mental leaps across time and space and—in the case of mathematics and science, too, not just French and Spanish—language is what education, in its most profound sense, is about. It is why the study of history—Babylon and Byzantium—is important—not only for the possibility of insights gained and lessons learned (though those are important, too. . .*Why are we in Vietnam?*. . .), but for the sake of the process itself, the apprehension of connections between familiar and foreign ground. It is why (apart from matters of beauty and power) non-contemporary literature continues to have value. It is where teachers—good teachers—have a germane, distinctive role to play, because the ability to stimulate, to point out and expose the connections, to guide towards springboards, does depend in part on the kind of know-

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ledge that students are not likely to have picked up on their own, as well as on an intelligence and quickness which obviously have nothing to do with age or erudition. It can be an exhilarating, soaring process; and to deprive students of it for the sake of more time spent scrutinizing their immediate surroundings, easily explored outside of school, is to cheat them out of something precious.

Of course most schools don't operate at this exalted a level. But it is something to aim at, and one of the troubles with the fashionable educational thinking is that it gives the goal such short shrift. (Which is not to say that rock shouldn't be a self-evident part of a music history course; or that movies can't be a constant reference in studying Dickens.)

But what if this goal doesn't seem important to the students? Shouldn't they have the final say on what affects them? And if the stretching process is so exciting, why, when it's left up to them, do kids almost invariably choose to study fields they're already familiar with, subjects close to home? Partially, I think, it's because things like race relations and the problems of health care delivery do have a legitimately imperative quality, whose pull it would be supercilious to question. Partially it's because the way in which traditional subjects are actually taught in most schools does very little to generate the excitement they have the potential to yield up (which is another way of saying that there aren't enough good teachers in the system): the kids don't know what they're missing. But partially also it's because that although the investigation of any subject involves a certain amount of stretch, straining across distances is *harder*—requires more effort and more discipline than delving deeper into an area you already know a fair amount about before you start. And, like the rest of us, most students, most of the time, have a tendency to elect the less rigorous way out. Heresy, I know, but I think it's accurate—it was certainly true for me. There's another factor, too, in the way "relevant" subjects usually end up being taught. It's perfectly possible, of course, for "free" work in a "problem area" to be intellectually demanding. In practice, though, I suspect that apart from the challenge of it all, one of the other reasons students are so enthusiastic about the approach is that they can get away with a good deal more bullshit in this type of course than they could in a conventional one.

So should it be left up to the kids? I'm not sure it should (though in most instances, greater participation would indubitably be a Good Thing). I'm not sure that the elements of laziness and expediency that enter into the preference (inconvenient as it may be to acknowledge them) don't adversely affect its validity; and, reactionary as it sounds, I'm not sure that students—high-school students—are in fact always the best judges of their own self-interest. I'm not sure they can be. It's a rare 14-year-old who, given the choice, *wouldn't* pick science fiction over *Moby Dick*. It may turn out that he would have been more engaged by *Moby Dick*, that the excitement would have been worth the extra effort. But he has no way of knowing that, and everything mitigates against his taking the chance on his own.

Mind Resistance

Which brings us to the subject of discipline in general. Not mickey-mouse stuff like hall passes and exaggerated respect for teachers and sitting in rows—obviously those are silly—but things like assignments and regular class attendance, which Postman, Weingartner, and others manage to put into the same category. Self-motivation is all very well in theory. But there is a gap—any experienced teacher knows it, as does anyone who's ever resolved to do all the reading in an audited course—between impulse and follow-through, between wanting, however genuinely, to do

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something that requires intellectual effort and forgoing things that are more fun or easier in order to do it. I don't care how intriguing a subject is, there are things kids, most kids, would rather do with their time than study. I know, I know: "natural joy in learning" and "artificial distinction between work and play." But we're not talking about primary schools, where work and play *are* (or should be) very close; let's face it, the character of play does change as you get older.

All of us, in fact—with some rare, admirable exceptions—have that built-in resistance to serious intellectual effort, a predilection for immediate self-gratification over the more distant variety, even if we know that the distant one will prove to be more deeply satisfying. No matter how much you love what you're working at, the work itself usually involves a fairly constant, low-thrumming battle against succumbing to the allures of TV—or of reading novels or going sailing or going drinking or going to the movies or making love: play.

The first point about all this is that the obligations do exist in real life; if the schools are to be truly undivorced from the outside world, kids ought to be given practice in coping with them. But there's another, more positive sense, and this is more pertinent; more than the course content, I think, it's the crux of the difficulties Alex encountered in her second school—in which the obligations are not constructive, but enabling, a sense in which they help bridge the gap between impulse ("Science fiction, wow!") and the self-discipline ("*Three* books this week?") required to carry it out. Sometimes, in other words, obligations *help* you do what you want. To remove them completely, in a school setting, can be a misguided kindness. It places on the kids a burden of will power that's unrealistic and unfair. More often than not, I think, it ends up introducing an element which provides a barrier to learning rather than a more open road.

Most kids, most of the time, do need some kind of structure. As with parental discipline, they often don't need as much as they get. But they do need some—even if, as James Herndon points out in his new book, *How to Survive in Your Native Land*, it's only to kick against. And if, as the fashionable thinking holds it out to be—and as it should be—the goal is individual flexibility, the optimal conditions for each student, it's ridiculous to set total freedom as the norm. There are always kids who can handle it, who are so extraordinarily self-motivated that will power presents no problem. And there are always occasions when a class as a whole is stimulated to that height, when in a great clamor of enthusiasm, extra unrequired reading actually gets done. But to gear the way a school is run around those kids, or around the sustaining of those moments, just doesn't make sense. If there are exceptions to be made—and of course there are—let them be made the other way.

The Real White You

But perhaps the most bothersome aspect of the fashionably liberal educational philosophy articulated by Postman and Weingartner is its rather arrogantly narrow-minded view of what the problems are. For despite the book's aura of inclusiveness, the real "you" of *The Soft Revolution* is the middle-to-upper-middle students at "good" schools and colleges who are suffering from boredom, lack of fulfillment, and too-strict dress codes. There are a lot of those kids, of course, and it's too bad that they're not having a fuller, freer school experience. But a significant part of the school population is someplace else, and the crisis in American education is their crisis, too.

The most striking illustration of the contrast between the two groups is that while Postman and Weingartner are railing on about the uselessness of grammar—it's a real fixation of theirs;

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they take it up two or three separate times—the eight young Italian authors of *Letter to a Teacher* (forget for a moment the difference in nationality), who are just as outraged and angry at a rigid, uncompassionate school system, but who also come from bitterly poor, uneducated families, have dedicated their book to "Father Miliani, who... taught us the rules of writing." The point is that it's all very well for Postman and Weingartner to be so disdainful of formal grammar instruction, to suggest, as they do, that kids can learn to write competently simply by being let loose to read. It may even be true in the case of the kids they're talking about, who have books around the house, who read well and easily, and who, most importantly, find little discrepancy between the language in books and the language they've grown up hearing around them outside of school. But grammar—which is essentially *showing* how language works—is not so useless when the kids you're trying to teach to write speak on their own a language completely separate from the one in books; when very often and for that reason, they find reading difficult or threatening; when, for the same reason, the link between seeing a finished product and being able to produce something similar is considerably more tenuous for them than for their suburban counterparts.

And sure, it's artificial, and sure, it's somewhat coercive, and sure, according to the tenets of the fashionable thinking, the kids ought to be running around taking photographs of the neighborhood instead, because that would be more meaningful. (And *is*, probably.) But it's also necessary, the-world-as-it-exists, for these kids to be taught formal grammatical English, and taught it *well*. Not because it's inherently more worthwhile than what they grow up speaking—street talk's a rich, compelling language, an intricately structured and shaded one, as linguists have begun to discover—but because there are certain standards they have to conform to, to get jobs, to get through the unenlightened colleges that still make grammatical English a part of getting through: to escape from the poverty-noose strangling them now. Perhaps then their kids won't have to follow them into schools which are filthy, chaotic, ill-equipped, physically as well as spiritually violent, and drug-infested to a degree which makes the situation at most suburban schools look like a shadow.

The Apple as Meal Ticket

For a significant portion of the school population, in other words, education has a service to perform as a meal ticket. It may be a distasteful concept for the liberated theorists, or an obscure one. But it is a concept that has to be dealt with. Because the fact remains that at this moment in America the prospects for eradicating poverty at its source still look so dim that individual departures are probably the most realistic solution. If education is not a fool-proof escape route, it's at least more reliable than big-time crime—and for the kids in the slum-ghettos, practically speaking, these two are really the only avenues there are.

Back to the curriculum question, for instance. For the non-suburban schools to perform effectively as instruments of socio-economic mobility, they have a responsibility to teach not only grammar, but all the other basic skills and subjects that Postman and Weingartner dismiss so witheringly. When it comes from the undeprived, there is something about bourgeois condemnation of bourgeois aspirations that's cruel and smug. This doesn't mean that the skills shouldn't be taught with maximum verve and sensitivity, that street talk, for example, shouldn't be incorporated into classroom work as a way of approaching more formal language. And it doesn't mean that the photographs shouldn't be taken; or that the poems and stories shouldn't be written, and

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have to understand it:

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BY DAVID HAPGOOD

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judged with an eye to freshness and self-expression rather than on how "correct" they are—or better still, not judged at all. What it does mean is that these schools, if they are to meet their students' most pressing needs, simply cannot afford to give those things the primacy the fashionable thinking demands for them.

Or take grades. The contemporary folk wisdom, of course, is that grades are terrible things: they're inhibiting, they induce invidious competition, their sole purpose is to enable the schools to get kids into college. All of which is true enough (although, as Herndon observes ruefully, you get winners and losers in school no matter what system of evaluation you use)—and in a setting where "getting kids into college" is another way of saying "getting them into Harvard instead of Penn State," it may indeed constitute a valid indictment. But where the stakes are a bit different—where the alternatives are going to college or *not* going, and where the sheer fact of college attendance, rather than constituting slavish adherence to convention, can represent a chance for a measurably changed life—it's a different ballgame. Besides, there's an awful lot of bet-hedging involved in the liberated view. It's fine for the Montgomery County, Maryland, students—whose "Program for Change" is admiringly reprinted in *The Soft Revolution*—to call for the county-wide elimination of letter grades: "Colleges would have no choice but to consider each applicant from the county on their [sic] individual merits. . . especially in view of the reputation Montgomery County enjoys nationally as a school system of unquestionable academic quality." Exactly. When the Bedford Stuyvesant schools enjoy the same reputation, it will be time for them to get rid of grades, too.

But they don't—deservedly—enjoy it now. The inner-city schools have all the bad qualities associated with suburban schools (most, in fact, magnified 10-fold) without the significantly compensating factor—and come off it, gang, it does compensate for quite a bit—of academic excellence. And that, ironically, is what's far more crucial for their students than it is for the senior class of Chevy Chase High.

So, *priorities*. . . The most severe problems afflicting the non-suburban schools concern not the ultimate value of the subjects they teach, or the advisability of giving grades, but their sheer inability, by and large, to teach effectively, period. (Not just by standard national testing standards, either, but by *any* standards, empirical, formal, self-devised, whatever.) Here's where the open classrooms and the teacher accountability principle advocated by Postman and Weingartner come into play (although to judge from the degree of understanding displayed in the book the congruence seems hardly more than fortuitous)—not because they're morally or philosophically more desirable, but because everything seems to indicate that they work better. And if they don't, out they should go. The suburban schools may be able to keep them around on moral or philosophical grounds; the others don't have that luxury.

Luxuriousness, actually, may be the key sticking point in all this. Though some of the complaints in *The Soft Revolution* have a certain universality, looked at from a non-suburban standpoint, most of them (*That's* repression?) seem pretty pale. The problems confronted here are for the most part the problems of plenty; and after a while the primary response engendered by the book is: everyone should have such troubles.

And I suppose that's somewhat unfair—there's certainly a place for better-into-best reform, in education as in anything else. On the other hand, we're supposed to be talking about revolution. Any revolution as sealed-off as this book and the attitudes it embodies would be, I think, not soft, but flabby. ■

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